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*Hetty and her uncle, or, Six days at
service, by the author of 'Aunt ...*

Hetty



HETTY AND HER UNCLE;

OR,

SIX DAYS AT SERVICE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“AUNT ESTHER AND HER NIECE JANE.”

“I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”—PHIL. iv. 11.

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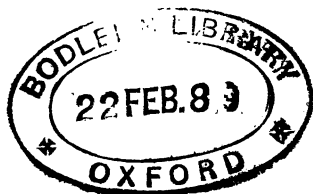
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HETTY AND HER UNCLE,

&c.



CHAPTER I.

“Now Hetty, my maid, pour out the tea: the clock is just on the stroke of eight.”

“Please, uncle, to wait just two minutes. The kettle does not quite boil; it is beginning to sing, and will boil up directly.”

"No, no, child; none of your dawdling ways for me: eight o'clock is the hour for my breakfast, and not for boiling the kettle."

Walter Wright said no more, but drew a mug of beer for himself, and, eating cheese with his bread instead of butter, made a hearty meal; for which blessing he thanked God devoutly, as he rose from table. After placing his own peculiar chair in its own peculiar place, he put on his hat, and strapped on the huge leather bag to hold the letters and parcels he was accustomed to carry to and fro, twice a day, between the village of Nutstead and the market-town of Lettsborough. The door was shut, but opened again by Walter Wright, who bid his niece remember that one o'clock *precisely* was his dinner hour, and that the potatoes were to be *boiled*, not *boiling*, at that time.

Hetty made no answer; not because she was sullen, but because her heart was too full for words to come without tears, and her uncle had already told her that *showers* were useless indoors.

Poor Hetty, she was hungry and miserable. She had not the heart to eat all alone, though the kettle did boil now—her two minutes had been twenty. She took up her work, and thought she would finish darning the stocking she had begun last evening; but the tears blinded her eyes, and she was sitting doing nothing but indulging idle thoughts and useless wishes, when a tap at the door roused her. Widow Gray entered in haste, but the kind-hearted soul forgot her hurry on seeing Hetty in tears.

"How now, my dear, what is the matter? Are you ill?"

"No, not ill, thank you," was the sobbing reply.

"Bad news then? Hast heard of thy sailor-brother?"

"No, not bad news, thank you."

"What then? Nothing amiss between you and your uncle, I hope, eh?"

"Oh, Mrs. Gray! he is so very *particular*, I fear I shall never be able to please him. The kettle did not *quite* boil, and so——"

"Ah, well! never mind telling about it: a grievance is twice a grievance when repeated. I can guess—but I can prophesy too—it will not happen so again. But I'll be bound your uncle did not go without a breakfast, neither must you, my lass. Come now, I'll be cook: reach me a little saucepan, and I'll give you a new receipt for bread and milk. I see you don't like to waste tea on yourself."

"I thank you, Mrs. Gray, but I can boil the milk without troubling you."

"No, no; you don't know how to make bread and milk: I watched you the other day. Tell me now how you do it?"

Hetty wiped her eyes, and spoke quite cheerfully, as she answered, "I first put the milk into the saucepan, and while it is boiling I cut a slice of bread into little square bits and put them into a basin, and when the milk boils I pour it over the bread."

"Ah, just so; that is the way you did it the other day; but, child, that is not my way, and

you know I learned to eat bread and milk, and make it too, before ever you were born. So now watch me."

The handy widow first broke the bread into the saucepan, then poured the cold milk over it, and let all boil up together. Hetty said she thought it tasted much sweeter and softer, and thanked Widow Gray for her new receipt.

"Ay, it not only eats better, but it is more saving too; for any little odd scraps of bread will do as well as a smooth slice cut off the loaf, you see, my dear. And if you *break* the bread instead of cutting it, it is lighter, and boiling it in the milk makes it a deal softer than when the hot milk is only poured over it."

"I will remember to make it your way next time. But must you go so soon, Mrs. Gray?" asked Hetty, seeing the widow move towards the door.

"Why yes, child. I've a letter for the post. I've missed Master Wright at his home, but I think I may still catch him at the Turnstile, if I put my best leg forward."

"Oh yes, that you will! He started before time, as he had to go to Beech Farm on his way."

"So much the better for me. Maybe I'll look in again by and by. But, Hetty dear, be sure to have the dinner punctual."

Left alone, Hetty soon returned to idle thoughts and vain wishes. "Oh," she thought, "if kind Widow Gray had been my aunt, instead of strict Uncle Walter being my uncle, how glad I should have been! I shall never be happy

any more, now dear mother is dead, and I am to live always with uncle. I shall never be able to please him, I know I shall not. He is more particular than even schoolmistress was, and she was bad enough. But then governess did praise me when I did well: uncle never does; he is very severe. I shall never love him, though poor dear mother made me promise to do so. I wish I had not promised. But if I can't love him, why I can't."

Such thoughts as these were not likely to make the duty more easy, and it was fortunate for Hetty that she had something else to do than sit still and think. The breakfast-table must be cleared, and the fire-place swept up. Her own and her uncle's bed must be made, and the potatoes washed; and she was startled to hear the clock strike ten before the first of these necessary duties had been even begun.

When Hetty had done all her work, and the potatoes were put in the pot ready for boiling, Widow Gray came in again. This time she had her knitting in her hand, for she was one of those who like "to be doing."

"Now, lass," she said, in her cheerful way, "we will finish our talk, while you mend and I make. How neatly you are darning that stocking! Master Wright will soon find his kindness to the orphan rewarded."

"I will do all I can for him," answered the young girl; "but it will be with a heavy heart, and often too, I suspect, with a wet eye."

"Fie, fie! you must not say so; you must

not think so. It is wicked to God, and ungrateful to man. If your good uncle had not opened his door to you, when your poor mother died, what would have become of you?"

"I don't know. I wish mother had never died. She was always kind and loving. It was a pleasure to do for her, but——"

"Better not go on, child; you have said enough. I like to hear you praise and bless your mother: she was a right good mother, and you cannot love her too well, or honour her memory too much. But you have a duty to perform to your uncle, *your mother's favourite brother*, you will do well to recollect."

"Yes, I know mother did love him very much indeed."

"Ay, sure; and why should you not love him too?"

"Because I can't," Hetty answered rudely.

"Not all at once, I dare say, but little by little you will," replied the widow mildly.

"Walter Wright has a stern manner, and rather a gruff voice; and he is also a man of few words, and particular ways: but after awhile you will get used to all that, and cheer up in your new home."

"*Never!* No, Mrs. Gray, I shall *never* learn to think of this as my home." Tears started into poor Hetty's eyes as she said so.

"Well," observed the widow, "it may be better as it is. If you are to go to service in a year or two, why this will be a good break in for you, child; for I can tell you, after thirty years'

experience of a servant's life, that a fond mother and a happy home is not the best preparation for those who have to rough the world."

"I should be glad to get a place to-morrow, if I were but old enough," was Hetty's honest but unwise declaration.

"Ah, my dear, young girls are all alike. Little troubles are great to them. But wait awhile. *Real* trouble will come soon enough; and then you'll wish yourself a child again; ay, a niece of Uncle Walter's."

"But what is *real* trouble, if it is not to lose a mother?" asked Hetty.

"Oh! I allow *that* to be a real, downright sorrow. But what frets you so, day by day, and hour by hour, is not, I think, so much the loss of your old home, as the discomfort of your new one. Is it not so now?"

There was truth in this remark. Hetty did not deny it, but returned to her complaints.

"It is so lonely, so dull up here, Mrs. Gray. No other cottage near; no Betty Morris or Jane Atkins looking in as they pass backwards and forwards to school; no one coming to shop next door, as it was at home, or folks calling with something or other to sell; no market-carts passing the door. Oh, it is so mortal dull up here in this out-of-the-way place! I never shall be happy again,—no, never!"

"Hetty," said the good widow firmly, "if you will go on talking like this, you will send me away. I came here just to cheer you up a bit, and drop a word in season. I promised your dear mother I would look to you a little at first;

but it is doing you no kindness, and your worthy uncle an injustice, to listen to this sinful murmuring."

"How can I help thinking of all this, when I am left hour after hour all alone?"

"By not talking over it when you are with others, my dear, and by giving yourself something else to think of when you are alone. A very good plan now for you would be to get something pretty off by heart. You used to be quick at learning by rote at school. Was it not so?"

"Yes, I got the prize for it. It never cost me much trouble; but poor Jane Atkins never could say the Lord's Prayer even without a blunder. I used to pity her, that I did."

"Well, then, you see it would be more like play than work to you now, and help to keep vexing, pining thoughts out of your head. Do now try, my dear: I have known the plan answer well before, I can tell you."

"Why, did *you* ever try, Mrs. Gray?"

"No, not myself; I'm like Jane Atkins,—not a ready one at getting words offhand, except it be with a bit of a tune to help me."

"Ah! many of the girls said that was easier than repeating verses without."

"I was going to tell you about my cousin,—it was she who tried the plan. She, poor thing! had a cross-grained husband. One day, when she was hushing her baby to sleep, the Vicar and his wife came in. The Vicar went out into the garden to speak to the husband, and madam sat down to wait for him. She noticed my

cousin's tears, and said, in her sweet, kind voice, 'It is sad to see so young a mother weeping over her first joy.' Those were her very words: pretty words, weren't they?"

"Yes. I suppose she meant the baby by *joy*?"

"Surely. No one knows better than myself what *joy* my first baby was to me. Well, so the lady and my cousin fell into talk, and madam gave her a deal of proper advice; and she recommended what might be useful to you, child,—it was the plan of getting by heart a verse or two of the Bible, as she sat over her work, or nursing her baby. Madam pointed out some passages which were likely to be a comfort and useful to my cousin; and a very good method it proved."

"Did it make her leave off fretting?"

"Not entirely, and all at once, dear; but she did not fret half so much, and her husband was not so often cross, either; for nothing used to raise his temper sooner than to find his wife with red eyes, or to hear her sigh, and see her go moping about the house."

"But, I say, Mrs. Gray, if it was his crossness that made her do so, he ought to have had patience with her, I think."

"Ay, ay; but men will be men. Now, Hetty dear, your uncle is a man, and a bachelor man too, and not used to women and children in his house; so you see you must learn to make allowance. *He* may have *his* thoughts and wishes about his niece, as well as his niece hers about her uncle.

But as a man who fears God, and loves to serve Him, he will stick by his duty to you; and I hope you will do the same by him, for you too have been brought up to fear God."

In the course of half an hour the kind widow had greatly cheered Hetty in her new, dull home, and given, besides, some useful hints and good advice; and when she left her, the dinner-table was all prepared; every thing that they thought could be wanted was placed ready, even to the mug of beer, and crust of brown bread which it was Master Wright's custom to eat with it. Hetty kept her eye on the clock, and just five minutes before one her uncle entered.

"Now dish up," he said, as he passed to his own room to wash his hands and face free from the dust with which he was well powdered, and to put on a light, cool jacket, that was his indoor wear.

By the time he returned the clock had just struck, and the potatoes were placed on the table, smoking away most temptingly; but before they were tasted Master Wright repeated a verse from the thirty-fourth Psalm in a solemn and reverent manner: "The lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they who seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good." He then sat down, and cut a slice of the nice cold boiled pork which stood before him: this he gave to his niece, saying, "The first and the best for my sister's child."

"Thanky kindly, uncle," was Hetty's short but grateful reply.

"No thanks from kith and kin, Hetty. Duty is duty. God's favour and a clear conscience is better than many honey words."

Hetty said no more, but she handed her uncle the dish of potatoes. He stuck his fork in one, and it broke all to pieces, so that he could not lift it to his plate.

"Over done: boil them less to-morrow, girl."

Hetty sighed to think that her punctuality passed unnoticed by a word or a look of approbation, though her want of skill in cooking was noticed at once. Nor, alas! was it only the potatoes that were wrong. Her uncle was rising to draw his beer, when she handed him the mugful she had prepared.

"Never draw beer beforehand, girl; it is as flat as pond-water. And hark ye, lass! punctuality does not mean being *before* time, but *in time*, to the *right* time."

Hetty did hearken: it was the longest sentence she had yet heard from her uncle; but she had nothing to say in reply. After dinner Walter Wright lit his pipe, and went out into the garden to smoke it. There was a long, straight walk across the top of the garden, with a bench at each end. Now it was the worthy postman's habit to retire to this walk for half an hour's daily meditation, whenever the weather was fine enough. He sat first on one of the benches for a few seconds, and then walked slowly to the other, where he seated himself for about the same time, then rose and paced back to the other again. When the pipe was finished,

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Wright devoted himself to his garden ; this was his domestic joy. It was a large garden sloping to the south, and well cropped with fruit trees, and a variety of vegetables ; flowers too there were in front of the cottage, and bordering the middle walk. These were for use as well as ornament ; for more than one bee-hive stood in the most sheltered corner of the garden.

A few minutes before the clock struck four, our friend Wright might be seen hanging up his blue apron and straw hat, and putting on the well-worn coat, and buttoning on the dusty leathern gaiters ; and when the clock struck, he issued from his cottage door, with his bag and his belt, a postman of village renown. While Her Majesty's *Mail Royal*, as the wags of the village delighted to call Master Wright, performs his daily avocation, we will inquire how Hetty passed her afternoon. She had washed up the plates and dishes, swept up the hearth, and tidied up the kitchen. Alas ! that there was not more to litter it, she thought, and sighed as she thought so. All this Hetty had done, and done well, for she was a clever, handy girl enough, and well trained, though a good deal petted by her mother.

Again the basket of grey worsted stockings stood before her, and she was turning them over, and thinking to herself that no wonder they wanted so much mending, since her uncle was always on foot, when some one passed the window, and, to her great joy, who should it be but Sarah Day.

"How kind of you to come and see me so soon!" cried Hetty, as she opened the door, and bid her late school-fellow welcome.

"You may thank Widow Gray," was the answer. "I had no notion of coming before next half-holiday; but I thought from what she said that you were a bit dull: so here I am, and make the most of me. La! what a nice roomy kitchen, all so tidy and clean, and you nothing to do but sit to your work in a clean white apron, like a queen! Well, Hett, you have got a home!"

"Thank you *very much* for coming so soon," said Hetty, taking no notice of the last part of Sally's speech.

"But Hett, my dear, you don't look perfect without puss purring by your side. Where is your cat? she is such a favourite of mine. Puss! puss!" cried the lively girl, "where are you?"

"You will call and look in vain; uncle has no cat."

"No cat! But why did you not bring your own with you, she was such a beauty, and so fond of you? I couldn't live without a cat."

"Don't ask me: uncle did not choose it. He hates cats."

"*Hates* cats! Why?"

"Oh! he says they kill his robins. I believe he has more than a dozen robins; he feeds them all through the winter."

"How stupid to care more for a bird out of doors, than a cat by the fire! Well, but he

should keep a dog, then. It is so dull for you to have no living animal to speak to, and he out all day."

"And as good as dumb when he is at home," was Hetty's discontented remark.

"Well, you are badly off. I'll ask Robert to give me his puppy for you: it's a little terrier dog, and full of tricks; and it would really be better company for you than a cat."

"Thank you, Sally; you are always so good-natured; but it will be no manner of use. Uncle said yesterday that he won't keep a dog till he wants to quarrel with Jones the keeper; so there is an end of that, too."

"How provoking! Well, but a bird, then. You shall have my goldfinch," persisted Sally.

"He'll find some fault with that too, I dare say," replied Hetty sullenly, "though he does keep a nasty magpie; and from morning till night it keeps on repeating, '*Poor Mag*, what's o'clock?' I quite dislike the creature. I do think uncle likes it just for the worry it keeps up about the clock."

Sally laughed, and Hetty went on, "I declare I can't sleep of a morning, for its noise and chatter, '*What's o'clock? what's o'clock?*' makes me dream it is late."

"Ah! ha! a good thing for you, who love your bed so well. What sort of a bed have you? Come, show me where you sleep."

Hetty led the way up stairs, and opened the door of a small, but comfortable chamber.

"La! this is sweet and snug!—white curtains, and a painted washstand, and a looking-

glass, too! Why you are quite a lady, Hett. And what is this door?"

"A closet—only a closet."

"*Only* a closet. Why it has shelves and drawers,—how complete! The deal looks new. Did your uncle really fit it up for you?"

"I guess so; he means to be kind, I believe."

"*Means*, child; is that all you say? *Is* kind, I should say. I should bless myself to change places with you; such a rout and a scout as it is with me at home from morning till night:—mother bidding me nurse baby, father wanting this, that, and t'other all at once, and all in a trice,—Bob's stockings to be darned, Willy's pinafore to be mended, all the plates and cups to wash, and the clothes to hang out, and fold for ironing." Sally drew a long breath, and then continued, "There's a life for you! When you are tired of acting the lady, just think of me, who would be thankful for a second pair of hands and feet; how much more then to play Queen Do-little, like you?"

"You would soon be tired of the change, I guess." But though Hetty said so, she looked pleased; it was a new view of the case. She felt, if not more grateful to her uncle, yet gratified in being a subject of envy to her old school-fellow; and she talked more freely and cheerfully during the rest of Sally's visit; but as it was about school-days and school-doings, it is not worth repeating.

But let us inquire what effect the visit had altogether on Hetty's temper of mind. Was

she more or less happy and contented afterwards than she was before? I am afraid not. Sally had not, like Widow Gray, given her good advice, or tried to place Hetty's duty to God and her uncle before her. She had noticed the want of a cat or a dog as a grievance. In Hetty's present gloomy temper such a trifle appeared to be a real misfortune. Even when the advantages of her new situation were pointed out, it was done in a light, playful way, that did not bring home gratitude to her conscience as a serious duty or religious feeling. The widow's visit was the most useful, if not the most agreeable of the two; for that set Hetty thinking good thoughts, and making wise resolutions; she had even looked out a passage in her Bible and half learned it. It was one that her mother had often talked to her about: the description of a wise woman, in the last chapter of the Book of Proverbs. She had no inclination, however, to perfect herself in it after Sally had left her.

But to continue the history of the day: *one* is as good as six; for so regular were Walter Wright's habits and employments, that every day was very much alike.

At six o'clock the evening meal was eaten. This time nothing was wrong; not even the radishes, which Hetty had been desired to wash, were forgotten; all passed off quietly, if not cheerfully. No word of praise or encouragement was given, Uncle Walter did not think of it; no word of blame was spoken, for none was called for. Supper finished—for the meal was

more like supper than tea—Wright tied on his blue apron, and set forth to labour in his garden.

After Hetty had placed things in order within, she ventured to follow her uncle, and ask if she might help him. She was set to weed a bed of young carrots. Unluckily her zeal was greater than her knowledge; and when Master Wright returned from a distant part of the garden, where he had been sowing broad beans, he had the mortification to find that his young apprentice had cleared the ground both of crop and weeds! It was fortunate for Hetty that her uncle was a good Christian, who had learned self-control, or he might have been tempted to give the ignorant girl a hearty box on the ear, instead of only remarking, in his dry, short way, "There, that is quite enough; I can plant them again. Now you may go indoors."

Poor Hetty felt vexed enough. It was plain she had done something wrong, but she did not dare ask what; and when she reached the house, she went up into her own little room to have a good cry.

When it was too dark for Wright to work any longer, he came in, washed his hands, and lit his candle. He placed his large folio Bible on the round oak table, and began to read it devoutly, as was his wont, previously to going to bed. But on a sudden he bethought himself of his new companion, and going to the foot of the stairs, called in a low voice, "Hetty, my niece, are you gone to bed without your chapter?"

“No, uncle, I am coming,” she replied, and took her place by her uncle’s side, while he read aloud. She sat quite still, with her hands crossed in her lap ; for she had been taught to reverence the Bible above every other book. The reading finished, Wright asked God’s blessing and protection for them both through the night, and each remained a short time afterwards in private prayer. They then shook hands, and parted for the night—Hetty to cry herself to sleep, for she thought of her mother’s kindness—her uncle to examine himself, and commune with his own heart, and muse on the happiness of his departed sister, and then to sleep soundly until awakened by the bright rays of the rising sun.



CHAPTER II.

I HAVE said that *one* day will serve for a specimen of every day, and so it will, Sunday excepted. Sunday was a day which stood by itself; it was not like any other day. The trusty postman changed his character with his dress, and became parish clerk. Letters, it is true, came in and went off on Sunday at Nutstead the same as on other days, but Master Wright had found a substitute for that day, to

set him at liberty to attend to his duty at the church—a duty he performed as unto God, considering it a privilege to hold any office, however mean a one, in the house of God. It was Wright's custom to dress himself ready for church before he left his bed-room, so that, after breakfast, he had a good hour to spare before it was time for him to be at the vestry. This hour was *now* devoted to his niece. He heard her repeat the collect, and explained any thing in the Psalms for the day which he thought she might not understand. He then offered up a short prayer for her and himself, that they might both make a right use of the Lord's day; read, learn, and inwardly meditate on the Scriptures; pray with the spirit and with the understanding; praise God in heart as well as voice, and profit by the word preached. The words he used were few, plain, and to the purpose. Hetty quite understood them, and felt them too; for her uncle prayed in earnest, and she added her "Amen" very sincerely.

When Uncle Wright left the cottage, he told Hetty to listen for the chiming of the bells, and then to follow; and he bid her be sure and lock the door, and put the key in her pocket; all which she did, and was walking slowly and thoughtfully along, when she heard her name called by some one behind her. It was Sarah Day, who was running as fast as she could to catch her. "How early you are!" she said. "Why I thought I should have plenty of time to settle my curls by your looking-glass; ours is broken all to smashes. See! I'm all in curl-

papers; do step back again, and just let me comb out my hair."

"Won't it make us too late?" asked Hetty, hesitating what to do.

"Late! Why Hett, you are growing just as bad as your fidgety uncle; I suppose he'll tell tales of you to the Vicar."

"No, I was not thinking of uncle then, but of dear mother. She was always vastly particular about being in good time for church, though she never teased about other things."

"But we sha'n't be late, I tell you, unless you make us so by all this shilly-shally."

"Come then, quick!" cried Hetty, running back to oblige her friend.

Sally took so long dressing her hair, that Hetty grew really fidgety, and threatened to go without her; and this she would have done, but for having to lock the door after her. Hetty looked at the clock; it only wanted eight minutes to church time, and they had a full quarter of an hour's walk before them.

"Sally, you *must* come," she cried impatiently; and this time Sally did come. She looked at the clock, and laughing, said, "We must run for it, Hett, my dear; but I am so glad we came back; my hair looks beautiful now, just like Betsey Kean's, the milliner's 'prentice."

Hetty made no answer; she was already through the garden-gate, and running down the lane. She knew that she must walk, not run, when she got into the high road. Mother had never allowed of running to church; but she walked as fast as she could, and soon lost sight

of her companion, who joined some other girls who were so in the habit of being late, that they lost all shame about it.

The bell stopped just before Hetty got to the churchyard. The service was begun. She had no time to collect her thoughts; and, kneeling down, hurried over a few words of prayer, without thinking of their meaning. She was afraid to look towards the reading-desk, lest she should see her uncle's eye fixed on her with one of his stern looks. She did not know that he had been busy finding a seat for a stranger, and for this reason had not noticed Hetty's being late. Hetty was hot from running and walking so fast. During the lessons she untied her bonnet, and fanned herself with her pocket-handkerchief, as she had often seen Sally do. This reminded her of Sally, and she looked towards her, and admired the curls, and wished that her own hair was long enough to curl like Sarah's. Just then the words came into her mind, "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised:" words that she had learned but yesterday. She made an effort over herself, kept her eyes on her book, and paid more attention than she had done before. There was no sermon, for it was Sacrament Sunday.

When Hetty returned, she took off her bonnet and shawl, and sat down in the cool kitchen. There was no fire, as the Sunday's dinner was always baked at the baker's. She began, as usual, to think of her mother. But her conscience reproached her for her conduct at church, and made the thoughts of her mother

more bitter than usual. The tears, which soon fell freely, were not those only of sorrow for the recent loss of her parent, but partly of vexation. She was vexed with herself, but not humbled.

"It was all Sally's fault," she said to herself. "*She* made me late; and, being late, fussed me, and made me hot, and unable to say my prayers or attend to the lessons. I declare she shall not make me late again, not even if she goes to church in curl-papers." This resolution satisfied her: she was sorry for having done wrong, and determined not to do so again. Is this all that is necessary? No. Hetty should have confessed her fault as well as lamented it; asked forgiveness of God, and the help of his Spirit to do better in future.

To get rid of disagreeable thoughts, and while away the time till her uncle should return, the young girl strolled round the garden, and to her great joy discovered a bird's nest in the old tool-house: it would be something to watch and look after. She then thought she would gather some flowers, and make a posy for the kitchen window. "It will smell sweet, and look cheerful," she thought. "Mother always liked a nosegay, and so do I."

In due time Uncle Walter returned, bringing with him the baked meat and potatoes, all nicely browned, and smoking hot. Hetty was hungry, and listened to her uncle's grace with a feeling of real thankfulness. They ate their dinner nearly in silence. Master Wright's words were fewer on Sunday than on other days. At first the silence was a comfort to Hetty, as it proved

to her that her being late at church had not been noticed. After a little while she began eagerly to describe the bird's nest, and to ask one or two questions about it. All she got in reply was, "To-morrow you shall show me the nest; but don't look at it again to-day, or it will be forsaken."

Again Hetty made an attempt to talk. "See, uncle," she said, pointing to the window, "there is a fine posy!" He did turn his head, but said not a word; if he had, it must have been a cross one. He was very much vexed. It was not his habit to gather his flowers, and he thought it a great liberty for any one else to do so. Unluckily, too, Hetty had gathered a particular sweet-william, that had been carefully marked for seed. This was provoking; but Uncle Walter went into his room without a cross word. It was only his silence that led Hetty to think that she was wrong to gather the flowers without first asking leave.

On Sunday Master Wright neither smoked his pipe nor paced the garden; whether he read or rested till church-time Hetty did not know. She cleared away, made all tidy, and then fetched a book which had been given her for a prize at school: it contained some hymns, as well as other pieces; and she learned one that she had often and often read to her mother.

That afternoon she was to go to a small church which stood in the Priory Park: every other Sunday there was service there for the inhabitants in that distant part of the parish. Before she set off, Widow Gray called, and offered to

take Hetty with her. It was a very pleasant walk, partly across the fields, and then along the shady old avenue. It was quite a treat to the young girl, and she enjoyed it all the more from having a kind, cheerful companion, one whom she knew her mother would have approved of for a Sunday walk.

"Well, Hetty, my dear," said the widow, "we are now beginning a new week; I hope you and your uncle will hit it off more cleverly. How have you got on the last few days? Have you learnt to be more exact?"

"I was behind time again yesterday, or else all has been pretty smooth."

"Late in the morning; oh! that was a pity. Do not let that be again, dear. You see, the post is such a particular thing, uncle cannot wait, even if he would."

"I wish he was not postman," said Hetty; "maybe he would be less particular if it was not for that."

"Wishing is foolish work; it will not alter what is: besides, child, you are only thinking of yourself. It is an employment that suits a man of your uncle's age better than harder work; and you may be proud of the way in which he performs his duty. Every one says he is so honest and trustworthy, so punctual and exact, so civil and obliging, that he is a pattern for all letter-carriers. Now why should you not share his praise, and become a pattern for all postmen's housewives?"

Hetty smiled at the widow's joke, but did not promise to try. After a moment's silence, she

exclaimed, "How glad I am that it is church Sunday at the Priory! It is such a pleasant walk, and after the rain last night every thing is so fresh and sweet in this beautiful park. I do think, Mrs. Gray, the Garden of Eden must have been some such sort of place, only more beautiful still, with fruit as well as flowers."

"Yes, child, *fruit* there was, sure enough: the forbidden fruit grew there, of which Eve ate herself, and then gave to her husband, and he did eat; and we rue the sad consequence of that sin of hers to this day."

"It seems hard, though, that it should be so, does it not?"

"Hush, child! lest you charge God foolishly, even in thought. Suppose that *you* had been Eve, how would you have acted?"

"Me? Oh! I should have eaten the fruit, I am quite sure I should."

"And so, I fear, might I; it does not become either of *us*, then, to complain."

"But Eve had advantages that I have not; I think sin in *me* more excusable than in *her*."

"No, no, you are mistaken there; Christians in these days have every advantage."

Hetty said hastily, "Well, it is no use fretting about Eve's sin now; let us enjoy our walk, and talk only about pleasant things. How happy the nurserymaid at the Priory must be to have such a park as this to walk in with the little ladies! How pleasant it must be to bring out her work under those great trees, while the children play about! That is the sort of service I should like, then I should be happy."

"Perhaps so, perhaps not," replied the widow ; "for it is not a fine park to walk in, good wages, or an easy service that makes happiness. The nursemaid at the Priory, who has all these, told me but yesterday that she envied my Martha her place at Lettsborough ; for Sophy said she found the park mortal dull, and longed to be again in the bustle of her native town : Lettsborough was all life and gaiety, with its market twice a week, and spring and autumn fairs."

"Well, she may be right ; I dare say living in a town is more cheerful. I should like to try both, and then make my choice."

"And be wrong either way, dear, if you expect to find happiness in *outward things*. To be really happy, we must be happy at heart ; that is just the grand thing."

"But how are we to be so?"

"By loving and obeying God Almighty, to be sure. What was it that made your dear mother happy at heart, when she was stretched there, week after week, and month after month, on her sick bed ? Suffering, too, in body, as she did, what was it made her happy?"

"I always was surprised to hear her say that she *was* happy ; I did not think she could mean really happy, but content to submit to the will of God ; more that kind of thing."

"No, it was more than that, child ; her smile had heaven in it ; it told of *joy*, not of *submission* only. She loved to think of heaven, and longed to be there at the feet of her Saviour. But you are too young in the ways of godliness to enter

into such ripe feelings of happiness as hers were. But just to explain what I mean, I'll put a question : Which days were your happiest when at school ? tell me now."

It did not take Hetty long to think. "Those when I gained the most tickets, to be sure, Mrs. Gray; and happiest of all, the day when I received my reward-book."

"No doubt; and it did not much signify to you, on those days, whether the sun shone, or the rain fell, did it, child?"

"Not a bit. What did I care for weather? I got my tickets, and mistress praised me all the same, sunshine or not, summer or winter."

"Just so. Your joy was *then* joy of the heart and conscience—*inward*, not *outward*."

"But what has that to do with me *now* that I have left school for good and all. Big girls don't think and feel as if they were children." Hetty drew herself up as tall as she could.

"It would be wiser if they did, and better for them too."

"La! Mrs. Gray, you cannot mean it; I do not understand you."

"Ah! my dear, I know I am not much of a hand at teaching others; I was always a dull one to learn myself, never having had much schooling. But when I was a big girl, and was questioned before I was confirmed, I recollect the clergyman telling me, that though I was grown up, and had left school, and out in service, I ought not to think I was accountable to no one, because I had left father and mother ;

or to think that I was to leave off learning and submitting, because I no longer went to school ; nor that I had no one to love and obey, since my father and mother were far away : for that as long as ever I lived in this world, I ought to think myself at school."

"La! Mrs. Gray, how very odd!"

"Stay, child, till you hear me out. He explained it this way: he said, Christ was the Christian's schoolmaster, and the oldest and best of them only still scholars, with much always to learn and practise, even if they lived to be a hundred years old. Then he told me too, that heaven was the *home* I was to look for, and that I must be made fit for it while at school in this world. I was not to look for, or expect to find happiness on earth as a separate thing, but only as connected with religion, love to God and duty to man; that, he said, was the best way to look for happiness."

"And did you believe it?"

"Of course I did. It was the clergyman himself who told me all this. It was a new thought to me then, and I got it wrote down as well as I could in a spare leaf of the Bible he gave me. And many and many is the time that I have pondered over it since. It is all true enough, at least to me; I have found it so, and I bless the good old gentleman to this day for the pains he took to put me in the right way, just as I was starting into busy life. I always loved to hear him preach from that day forward. It was so kind to talk so to a poor ignorant girl like me!"

"Well, I cannot say that I am at all as happy

as I had expected to be arter I left school," owned Hetty. "I thought to get rid of all my troubles at once, and have my own way, and please myself. But then, you see, dear mother died ; and living with uncle is much the same as being at school."

"Something like, maybe, just at first. But Hetty dear, if you would but set your mind to it, and try to do your duty in the new situation of life in which God, for wise reasons no doubt, has seen fit to place you, I am quite sure and certain you would be less unhappy *now*, and, after a bit, content ; ay, and light-hearted as a bird."

"I cannot believe it, and have no heart to try."

"Pray to God, then, to give you a mind. You know what the Bible tells us, that God is as willing to give us his Holy Spirit, as a father is to give his children food. Do not give it up, then, till you have tried what prayer will do. I remember that you told me your good mother talked to you a great deal about prayer the day before her death. I remember we talked about it after the funeral."

"So we did, and I prayed very often the first week after she was buried ; but then little by little I left off, and since I came to live with uncle I have cried a deal more than I have prayed."

"I think if you prayed more you would cry less : do, my dear, try. When you are sad at heart, and vexed in spirit, go to your snug little room, and kneel down, and ask God Almighty to comfort you, and give you strength to do your

duty ; and, instead of brooding over every little trouble as it comes, count up your blessings, and that will help to make you thankful. You know Polly Deans ; her mother died the same day yours did ; but she had no good uncle to come and look to her, and take her to feed, and to keep, and to share his home."

"Poor Polly ! what became of her ?" asked Hetty, eagerly.

"Why she was taken to the Union ; she was too young for service, and had no friend to take her. Poor child ! she is more to be pitied than you are."

Hetty did not speak ; she felt her conscience reproach her for not being so grateful and contented as she ought to be. Little more was said before they reached the church. They were in good time ; Widow Gray always wished to be so. Though the bell had not stopped, she said, "Let us go in at once, for I see Sophy coming. I would rather speak to her after church, my thoughts are so easily unsettled."

They went into a pew ; and after the widow had been what Hetty thought a very long time on her knees, she opened her Prayer Book, and began to read. Hetty busied herself finding out the lessons in her Bible, and turning over the leaves of a hymn-book. When the family from the Priory came into church, her attention was called off to them ; but when once in the pew, the green curtains were closed, and hid them from her sight. Fortunately the servants sat behind her, or she might have found Sophy's smart bonnet as disturbing to

her thoughts as Sally's pretty curls. As it was, the small congregation, made up mostly of old people and a Sunday school, helped to fix her attention; for if her eye wandered, the devout look of some old man or woman was a reproof; and if she forgot to join in the responses, the voice of the little scholars reminded her of her duty.

The sermon was on death; and the thought of her mother made it easy for Hetty to keep her attention fixed. Upon the whole she behaved well, and left the church satisfied with herself,—too well *satisfied*; for though she was so ready in the morning to throw the blame of her want of seriousness upon Sally, it did not occur to her to give any credit to Widow Gray for the afternoon's improvement, though justly her due.

After they left the church, Sophy joined them. She and Mrs. Gray were old acquaintances; but Hetty had never seen Sophy before, and longed much to question her as to the pleasures of her place as nursemaid in such a grand family. After a time she ventured to put in a word. "Pray was that my lady, in the pretty pink silk bonnet?"

"No, indeed," said Sophy; "that was Miss Walker, the new governess. My lady wore the straw bonnet with the white ribbon, and the dark silk dress. *She* never dresses like what I call a lady;—no bright colours, no feathers or flowers, when she is in the country. I like to see her on court days; *then* she must be grand, you know!"

"She never did care for dress, I believe," observed the widow. "I can recollect her as a bride;—a true lady in her ways, gentle and gracious, but never a gay dresser."

"And the young ladies are all of her pattern," said Sophy; adding, with a saucy laugh, "I declare I am ashamed of them sometimes in Portman-square, among all the pretty, fancy-dressed children. I am often told it is a wonder I like to stay in such a dowdy lady's service; and sometimes I think I'll quit."

"That would be foolish, indeed." The widow looked very grave as she said so. "I hope you would not expect *me* to look out for you again, after getting such a respectable, comfortable situation as this for you."

Sophy perceived that Mrs. Gray was not pleased. She was vexed at this, as the widow had always been a warm friend, and was thinking how to answer, when Hetty asked her, "Which do you like best, living in London or here?"

"I like the gaiety and bustle of town, to be sure; but then those long flights of stairs are a great plague. In the warm weather I have not a leg to stand on, I am so tired: up and down twenty times a day! And the London nursery is small, and the bed-rooms dull, for they look over the mews; and we are all covered with blacks from a bake-house chimney, which is always smoking away, night and day, right before the nursery window."

"You must, then, be quite glad to leave London, and come to this beautiful fresh park?" observed Hetty.

"Not I, indeed," said Sophy, carelessly.

"At least you must enjoy the large, airy nursery, and cool, clean bed-rooms?" the widow remarked.

"Just for a change it is well enough; and one likes to talk to the nurses in the square about the park and the Priory, it sounds grand, and all that; but if I speak the bare truth, I would rather be a maid of all work at Lettsborough all the year round, than nurse to my lady this, or my lady that. Children are such a worry, and such a confinement. I declare I must not stop *now*, or they will be crying out for their tea before it is half ready for them: so good-bye, Mrs. Gray; please to remember me to Martha when you write, and tell her not to forget me, if she hears of a situation at Letts that would suit me."

"Indeed, I shall do no such thing," returned Widow Gray: after a moment's pause, she went on, "She is a silly girl not to know when she is well off. Now, Hetty, didn't I say right when I told you that it was not outward advantages that make folks happy, but a godly, contented spirit?"

"How smart Sophy dresses!" observed Hetty; "she must have high wages, if she can afford to wear kid gloves, a silk handkerchief, and such a lot of ribbon on her bonnet!"

"Ah! I fear all her money goes in smart clothes. She would do better to follow my lady's example, and then she would have something to put into the Savings' Bank for a rainy day, as the saying is."

"Or for her wedding," rejoined Hetty. "Sophy is pretty as well as smart; I dare say she will soon be married."

"I do not know that. Admired and flattered she is, and will be, like other pretty, silly girls of her age; but no steady, prudent man likes such a smart dresser for a wife. If she does marry, it will not, trust me, be the right sort of man to make a good husband. But we shall see; time will show. I have tried in vain to persuade her to be more careful and steady. Good advice is only thrown away upon her."

"But you do not think it is upon me, do you, Mrs. Gray?"

"No, dear girl; I hope better things of you. *You* were more carefully brought up, and had a good example set you by the best of mothers. Her prayers for you will, I trust, bring down a blessing on your head. It would go near to break my heart if you were to turn out badly, after all the care and love bestowed upon you by that dear, good soul. No, no, I will think and hope better things."

Hetty was touched with the widow's earnest kindness; she was almost tempted to promise to profit by all her good advice; but she was afraid to do so, and only thanked Mrs. Gray for the friendly interest she took in her. When they got near the end of their walk, the widow asked her young companion if she would go home with her, and drink a cup of tea. Hetty wished to say yes; she would have liked it of all things; but she hesitated on her uncle's account. Mrs. Gray was glad to find that she thought of him,

and told her he would not be uneasy, as she had mentioned her wish of keeping Hetty to tea to Master Wright after church in the morning, and he was quite willing. The fact was, that he had a great respect for Mrs. Gray, and was grateful to her for the notice she took of his niece; the more they were together the better for Hetty, and for himself, he thought.

Hetty enjoyed her cup of tea, and the cake that the thoughtful widow had made for her. "Yesterday was my baking day," she said, "and I thought a few currants and a little sugar put into a bit of the dough would be a change for you."

"Quite a treat, indeed. Though I am too old to be a school-girl, I can tell you, Mrs. Gray, that I have not lost my love for plum-cake."

"Well, dear, I am glad to hear you say so; I can make you a little one now and then. Eat another slice; it does me good to see you enjoy your tea so. You must come again soon."

There was less difficulty in promising to partake again of the widow's good cheer, than in promising to follow her good advice. At any rate the friendly cup of tea strengthened Hetty in her *wish* to do so; and she took care to be back in time to prepare her uncle's evening meal: indeed every thing was ready full ten minutes before he made his appearance.

Master Wright had been, since the afternoon service, to sit with an old friend who was ill and confined to the house. He talked over the sermon with him, and then wrote a letter for him to a son who was in service in Ireland.

Wright was often of use to his neighbours in this way, being as good a hand with his pen as the schoolmaster himself, and always ready to make use of it for others, accepting only thanks in return.

Hetty's spirits were raised with the pleasure of her walk, and the cheerful chat of the widow. Recollecting her good advice, she ventured to talk a little to her uncle, as he ate his supper. His answers were too short to encourage her much; yet there was no harshness nor unkindness in them to check her. Both felt the softening and cheering effect of a Sunday spent religiously. Master Wright especially felt the refreshment and variety afforded by this blessed day of rest.

When the table was cleared of the supper, the worthy clerk took down from the high shelf a curious old book, "Foxe's Book of Martyrs," in which he read diligently for more than an hour. Hetty, in the meantime, employed herself copying the memorandum from Mrs. Gray's Bible into her own. Her uncle was inquisitive to know what she was about, and when it was explained, he smiled at his niece, and for the first time she noticed in him a likeness to her mother; yes, it was the *smile* that was like hers.

Before bed-time the Bible was read aloud by her uncle. The portion he selected was the raising of Lazarus. It was a longer reading than usual, but Uncle Walter remarked to his niece that the history was too beautiful and affecting to be cut short, and that, whenever he

began it, he could not stop till he had ended it. The prayer which he then offered up referred to the passage just read. He petitioned for an increase of faith in Christ, as the resurrection and the life ; asked to be prepared for death, and made fit for heaven ; and, in conclusion, he offered up a thanksgiving for all those who had departed this life in faith and peace. No one was named in particular ; but the tears in Hetty's eyes, and the husky tone of her uncle's voice, as he bid her good night, proved that each had felt and thought alike of her who had so lately been numbered with the blessed dead.

Hetty lay down on her bed with a sincere determination to be grateful to God, and dutiful to her uncle. If she could not love she felt that she must respect him, and that would make her duty to him more easy.



CHAPTER III.

THE happy influence of Sunday lasted beyond the day. Widow Gray's exhortations, and Hetty's own good resolutions, were even acted upon for the first three days of the week; but then temptation assailed our young friend in her weak point. Sarah Day called in; she was on her way to the Priory with some needlework sent by her schoolmistress. Would Hetty go with her? she asked, eagerly; "it would be the only way," she added, "for them to enjoy a chat together." She had only time to run to the Priory and back.

Hetty thought for a moment. She had not asked her uncle's leave, and was not sure that she ought to go so far without it; but she wished very much for the chat with Sally, and so contented herself with the thought that she would be back long before he would be in from Lettsborough, and would tell him where she had been, so there would be no harm done. Her bonnet and her shawl were soon put on, and off she set with her giddy companion on their way to the park.

Once or twice, as they crossed the first field, Hetty interrupted the conversation by saying, "I hope I am not wrong in going;" or, "Uncle cannot be angry with me, can he?"

"La, Hetty! what a fuss you make! Why your uncle must be a very tyrant, if you are afraid just to take an innocent walk in the fields without asking! You forget that you have left school, and are no longer in leading-strings."

"No, I do not; but——"

Hetty was going to repeat what Widow Gray had told her about the world being a school, when Sally rudely cut her short, saying, "No prosing; it is not Sunday." And she began a long story of a scrape that her brother Robert had got into. This tale interested Hetty so much that she forgot her fears about her uncle. When the story was ended, Sarah asked her companion if she had nothing to tell her in turn.

"Oh yes, a great deal!" was the answer; and the history of the meeting with Sophy was given at length.

"What would I give to get her place!" cried Sally. "Do you think she really will quit?"

"If she could get a service at Lettsborough she said she would."

"No, it is no use *my* thinking of it, for though I am only two years younger than Sophy, I am short. I do not look my age. But why should not you try for the place, Hett? You know it was your particular friend that got the situation for Sophy. Mrs. Gray and Head-nurse Saunders are first cousins,—there is luck for you! No question, my dear, but you were born with a silver penny in your hand."

"But even if Sophy should leave, and Mrs. Gray would like to speak for me, uncle might not like me to go. He thinks me too young for service."

"There again comes uncle!—he is always in the way. Pray, now, how should an old bachelor man like him know any thing about young girls? If Mrs. Gray and Nurse Saunders thought you fit, and you wished it yourself, what need you care for old Master Wright's queer notions? With such a service as that at the Priory you would be independent of him."

Hetty said nothing. She liked the thought of Sophy's place and of independence but too well; yet conscience whispered, dear mother or Mrs. Gray would not like to hear Sally talk so. She was glad that at this moment they arrived at the private gate, and Sally said, "You must wait here; I shall not be two minutes. I have only just to leave the work, and speak a word to Sophy."

Sarah's two minutes became ten ; ten became twenty ; twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, and even sixty minutes did Hetty wait, fretting and fuming. Yes ; a whole hour passed slowly away before Sarah Day made her appearance. When she came she was all surprise : could not believe it possible. She had to wait for a few minutes before Nurse Saunders was at liberty to speak to her ; and then, after nurse and the younger children had gone out in the carriage, she had stayed just to have a little chat with Sophy, who was left at home,—fortunately, as the giddy girl thought,—to finish some work for one of the young gentlemen, who was going off to school. And so, in the delight of a regular gossip, a whole hour had slipped away.

“ Good luck to Madam Saunders for keeping me waiting at first ! ” cried Sally ; “ *that* will be my excuse to Governess for being so long away. As soon as we get to the fields we will have a race, Hett, and see who can run fastest ; but we must walk demurely down the avenue, for fear of meeting any of the quality. They are all out walking some where, Sophy told me ; maybe they are gone to the village, so prim is the order of the day. Is my shawl straight ? I must tie my bonnet, too, though it is so hot. ”

“ I do not find it hot, ” replied Hetty, “ almost cold. What with standing so long in the shade, and with the fear of being too late for uncle, I am all of a shake. ”

“ Uncle again ! I am quite sick of his name. Don't let me hear it again for the rest of our walk ! I was going to tell you—— ”

"Whether Sophy is really going to leave," cried Hetty, interrupting her companion. "Tell me *that* before any thing else; that is what I want to hear most of all."

"If you would have patience, girl, that is just what I was going to tell you. When I put the question to her gravely, she quite laughed in my face, and asked how I heard such a thing. When I told her, she said, 'Oh! I do recollect saying something to Mrs. Gray, but it was only because I and the nurse had some words on Saturday night.' Sophy was only put out, you see; not in earnest. Saunders gave her a smart blue silk scarf, and so matters were made up between them."

"And that is the way Sophy gets her finery, is it?"

"Some of it. But Sophy buys most of it herself; for, to let you into one of the nursery secrets, Mrs. Saunders' brother is a London haberdasher; and she likes her fellow-servants to show their love and respect to her by spending their wages with *him*."

"Dear me, how much I shall have to learn when I go to service!" was Hetty's simple reply.

"Ay! more by half than I shall, though I am a year and a half younger. I have my wits and eyes about me, which you have not, and never had."

Sarah looked cunning, put her hand in her pocket, and pulled out a paper of sweetmeat. "There, is not that dainty?" she said, as she offered a piece to the other; "this is something else you have to learn."

"It looks very tempting," was Hetty's answer, but she did not put out her hand to take any. Sally assured her that it would not make her tooth ache, if that was what she was afraid of. It was not over sweet.

"My tooth never troubles me now," was the reply ; "it was not that I was afraid of."

"What then ? qualms of conscience ?" asked Sally in a sneering way.

"I have no right to ask you how you came by the sweetmeat, and without I know that I would rather not eat any."

"I am much obliged, *Miss Precise*, for your good opinion of me," said saucy Sally ; and this answer confirmed Hetty in her fears that the sweetmeat had been got in some underhand way, and she had resolution enough to keep to her first refusal. All the pains her good mother had taken with her had not been thrown away ; the principles of honesty and integrity had been carefully planted, and taken root, and in this instance brought forth fruit.

"Some folks are more nice than wise!" was Sally's aggravating observation, after finishing the last bit of sweetmeat herself. "Now I will tell you that the goody was *given* to Sophy, and *given* by her to me. Next time I offer to share a treat with you, I hope you will not suspect me of stealing."

"Of *stealing*! Indeed, Sally, it was not *that* I meant. I should have eaten the sweetmeat, and enjoyed it, and thanked you for your good nature, if you had not said those words."

"What words, pray ?"

"Don't you remember? You said, 'This is something else you will have to learn.'"

"Really, Hett, you are too foolish; you cannot take a joke like another girl."

Though Sally said this, she knew all the time that there was but too good reason for suspicion. Sophy had made no secret with her of the way in which many such dainties were carried off from the dessert by the young footman, who, as he and she were townsfolk, shared such dainties between them. How little do young girls, in their eagerness to enter upon the novelty of independent life, think of the various temptations they will have to encounter!

At length the long avenue was passed, and the girls ran across the fields as if they were pursued by a mad bull. At the stile which separated the last meadow from the lane they bid one another good-bye, each hurrying on to their different destination. But what was Hetty's dismay when, on trying to open the door of the cottage, she found it locked! She now remembered, for the first time, that she had neglected to do this on leaving the house. She trembled at the thought that her uncle must have been home, found the door open, locked it, and gone out most likely to look for her. And such indeed was the fact. Master Wright had, on his return, found the house door closed, but not locked. After calling upstairs in vain, he looked for his niece in the garden. Not finding her there, he went into each room in the cottage. Still she was not to be seen; but noticing that some milk had been spilled in the larder, and

some bread and bacon carried off, he bethought him that a sturdy beggar might have frightened the young girl, and taken the food to satisfy his hunger. Such a thing, it was true, had never yet occurred in the quiet village of Nutstead; but how else could he account for the loss of the bread and bacon, and Hetty's disappearance? Master Wright again searched the garden. "Hetty, child, it is only your uncle," was repeated in every corner, but in vain. Then he searched the meadow, the lane; at last he retraced his steps to the village, to inquire of the neighbours if they had seen his niece, or if any vagrants had been noticed about the parish. No, neither the one nor the other had been seen; and worthy Wright was quite puzzled, when he fell in with Sarah Day.

"Have you seen Hetty?" was the ready inquiry.

"Is not she at home?" was Sally's evasive reply.

"She was not half an hour ago," said Wright.

"I think she is now, for I saw her get over the stile into the lane a little while back."

Sally's answer was not straightforward. She laughed at her friend for being afraid of Uncle Walter; but was not she a coward too? She thought to herself, "How cleverly I got off, and yet told no lie! Hett may relate her own story her own way; I have told no tales: and, if she has any wit, she can get out of the scrape as well as I have done."

Let us see whether Hetty will act as deceitfully. True enough, her uncle found that she

had returned: there she was, standing outside the locked door, ashamed to look him in the face, though his first words were words of kindness.

"Oh, my Hetty!"—he had never called her *my* Hetty before—"oh, my Hetty! are you there? Thank God, you are safe!"

The young girl felt only the more uncomfortable for this expression of kind concern, and was the more vexed with herself.

"I am very sorry," she began; "I did not think it was so late."

Wright's anxious look gave place to one of displeasure when he found that his niece had not been frightened away, but only playing truant. He said nothing, unlocked the door, and went at once into his own room.

Hetty threw aside her bonnet and shawl, and, without venturing to look at the clock, busied herself preparing the table for the evening meal. On going into the larder, what was her dismay to find the milk-jug empty and the bread and cold bacon missing! Who could have taken them? what must she do? Hetty asked herself. There was neither cat nor dog in the house. Uncle, she thought, must have hid them just to frighten her for her carelessness in having left the house without locking the door. Yes, she settled that must be it, and she waited impatiently for Master Wright to come out of his room. After half an hour had passed, he came and walked at once to the table, and took his usual seat in silence. At length he asked, "Are we to sup on the table-cloth?"

"No, dear uncle," Hetty replied humbly;

"if you will please to tell me where you have put the bread and meat, I will fetch them. Indeed, I am very sorry for being so careless—it was very thoughtless of me; but I never had to lock the door at home, so I have not yet got into the way of it."

He waited patiently to the end of this long sentence, and then said gravely, "I have not touched the bread nor the bacon, lass."

"Oh, uncle! then who or what has? I put them away in the larder, but the loaf and the bacon are both gone."

"Then, if there is nothing to be had, we must go to bed supperless."

"Oh, uncle, *you* must not! and all my fault too!" Hetty's tears began to flow.

"A man can fast from one meal without hurt," Wright observed drily, "but a young growing girl is different. I happen to have a biscuit in my pocket: this and a drink of milk will keep away hunger."

"Indeed, indeed, I would rather go without a supper myself than that you should," said the poor girl, checking her tears; "but all the milk is gone too. Who can have been in the larder?"

"It is not easy to tell, as no one was in the house to see; and no use to complain either. Some poor, hungry creatures helped themselves, I guess. Nothing but food is gone."

"I was very wrong indeed to go without telling you beforehand, uncle; and still more wrong to leave the door on the latch."

"Hetty, child, you say true; but I cannot find heart to blame you as you blame yourself."

"I do not deserve your kindness," sobbed out poor Hetty.

"Yes, you do. Will you make a clean breast, and explain how all this happened? I should like to hear, if you have courage to speak the truth; if not, better be silent."

"Indeed, I wish to tell you all: it would make me more comfortable."

"Well, then, let me hear."

Hetty told all, concealing nothing but the name of the young friend with whom she went to the Priory. "I would rather not tell who it was, unless you particularly desire to know, uncle, as it might get her into trouble. I do not wish to throw the blame on her. It was good-natured of her to propose the walk, which she knew would please me, but I was wrong in going. I blame no one but myself, and hope you will not either, please, uncle."

"I shall ask no questions of any one else. I believe what you have told me. Now let us take our spiritual food: our souls need not fast, thank God."

The Bible was opened and devoutly read, an appropriate prayer offered up, and Hetty went to bed, truly thankful that her uncle's "good night" was perfectly free from anger.

Next morning the penitent girl was up betimes. She hoped to be allowed to go into the village herself to fetch the bread and some milk, that her uncle might not be cut short of his time for his garden; but he was already come back from the village, as a loaf and jug, which he placed on the dresser, plainly showed.

"Oh, uncle, I had hoped to have saved you that trouble!"

"So you should, child, if I had not thought the baker might ask you questions you might not just like to answer."

"Well, uncle, that was kind," was all Hetty had time to say before Master Wright had closed the door, and gone to his morning work of watering his seedlings.

We may be quite sure that the kettle boiled at the right moment this morning, and that the meal was eaten with double relish by both uncle and niece, from their having gone supperless to bed; yes! a more lively feeling of gratitude filled the young girl's heart when a blessing was asked on the good food before her. While eating his breakfast, the friendly old man exerted himself to say a few words now and then, just to show the lass how completely she was forgiven; and her many words in reply showed how well this kindness was understood. Not even a look or a caution was given as the postman buckled on his letter-bag; but he was no sooner out of sight than Hetty fastened the door safely inside. She was somewhat afraid that the hungry wolf of the evening might return for a breakfast that morning; she even locked the larder, and carried the large key in her pocket, when she went upstairs to make her bed.

It was not till night that the thief was discovered to be the half-starved lurcher kept by an idle fellow suspected of poaching. The animal was detected returning for the rest of

his feast, which he had hid among the cabbages. Wright caught him in the fact, and had the satisfaction of inflicting summary justice.

For several days following the eventful one of the walk to the Priory Hetty felt particularly dull and lonely ; she saw no one. Mrs. Gray was engaged at a neighbouring farm, and Sarah Day was obliged to stay at home and nurse her little brother. She was glad of this excuse for keeping away, for her conscience was not easy ; she was afraid of Master Wright, and went to and from school by a back way to avoid the chance of meeting him.

Hetty strove to occupy her thoughts as well as her hands, and learned some verses, besides the thirty-fourth Psalm, and the parable of the prodigal son, both of which had been favourites with her mother. She found amusement, too, in watching her bird's nest, and still more in noticing the bees. In answer to some questions about them that she put to her uncle, he referred to a book which he told her she might read. This book treated of the nature and habits of these industrious little creatures, gave directions for their management, and recounted some curious facts about them. The book became a favourite one of Hetty's ; and she read and re-read it so often, that at last she knew more about bees than even her uncle, who had kept them for years !

Master Wright observed Hetty's efforts to be cheerful and contented ; and he did his part also, even to telling her to fill her bow-pot with fresh flowers. " I will lend you my knife, child,

for it is bad to *pull* the flowers off. And come with me, and I will make you sensible of the marks I have put to those plants I want kept for seed."

This was a comfort as well as a pleasure to Hetty, who had never ventured to gather any more flowers, though the Sunday nosegay was faded; she now felt that she was forgiven for having gathered it.



CHAPTER IV.

EARLY on Friday Hetty was agreeably surprised by a visit from good Mrs. Gray. The widow was evidently full of some piece of news; *pleasant* news, as was told by the smile on her face.

"Well, lass, what do you think?" she began. "But there you will never guess. My son Martin is coming to see me before he sails for America!"

"Indeed! how glad you must be!"

"Ay; so glad that I have lain awake all

night, thinking how I could contrive that my Martha should spend the week with him. She wrote me word—but, bless me, how warm I am ! and I am all of a shake : what with the flutter of joy, and the walking so fast, I almost *ran* up the lane !”

“Let me take off your bonnet, Mrs. Gray ; and do you sit quiet a bit, and rest, and cool yourself, before you tell all your news.” This was kind and thoughtful ; for the young girl was longing to hear the whole story.

“Oh ! but I have not time to sit idle, lass ; this is my baking day. And Martin may come to-morrow : most like he will ;—only think, to-morrow ! my dear, dear son ! But, my Martha, I want to tell you about my plan for her.”

“Ah, do ! I hope she will be able to come and see her brother.”

“She must, no doubt, she *must*. She sends me word by Brooks, the carrier, that she could get a holiday, if so be that I could get any one to take her place for a week or so.”

“Well, sure, you can do that easy enough, cannot you ?”

“Why not so *easy* ; for though there are many who would be glad to do it, there are but one or two that I could, with comfort, send to be with Patty’s mistress ; because she is blind, you know, and so it is a great charge, and needs a steady, trustworthy body.”

“Would not Susan Gilbert do ? She is a steady one, I am sure ; and dear mother used to say she might be trusted with untold gold.”

“Yes, and in that respect she might do, and

no one better; but, from being a little deaf, Susan talks loud, and her voice is harsh."

"Nurse Hall, would she do?"

"No, dear; she is too old by half: you see Mrs. Dorothy likes a cheerful young body about her; that makes her so partial to Martha."

"No wonder she likes her; Patty was always the life and fun of a holiday-treat. No one has taken her place in the school or village since she left: all of us loved Patty Gray. Oh! what fun we had when she was queen of the May!"

"Ay, you were all very kind to her, and made as much of her as if she had been a real queen. At times I used to think you girls would quite spoil her. But dear me! I must not stay talking over old times now: I am in such a twitter to fix upon some one to take her place, that she may not be disappointed of seeing her brother before he leaves England. Poor dear fellow! who knows if we shall ever meet again in this world? that great, awful sea will be between us!" A mother's tear was in her eye; but Hetty checked the gloomy thoughts by asking who the person was that Mrs. Gray had thought of as Martha's substitute.

"Can't you guess, dear? have you no suspicion?" The widow looked archly into the young girl's face.

"No, indeed; and yet——"

"Ah! now you have it."

"You cannot mean *me*!"

"But I do though. Should you like to go? If not, think no more about it; I see you hesitate."

"Oh! I should like to go, of all things in the wide world!" was the hearty exclamation. "But do you think uncle would let me? I should be afraid to ask him, for fear he should say no."

"Well, then, leave that to me. If you really think you should like to oblige my girl, why I will undertake to break the matter to Master Wright, and I will answer for it that *he* won't be a spoke in the wheel of your fortune; for, Hetty, who knows but if you can please Mrs. Dorothy Cape she may be the means of getting you a respectable service? you were wishing for one the other day."

"Indeed! do you think so?" The young girl's eye brightened at the thought of quitting her dull, lonely home for more active life. "But tell me, Mrs. Gray, what should I have to do? Should I be up to such a grand lady's service at first and at once?"

"The easiest place in the world for that. You will have *nothing* to do. You will just sit in the drawing-room with madam all day, and serve as eyes to her; read a bit now and then—you are a fine reader, like Patty, for that—and settle her knitting,—that you are handy at too; fetch her what she wants, and lead her round the garden."

"That part of my work I shall dearly like."

"Ay, sure; and it is such a choice garden. And though the poor lady cannot see a single flower, yet she takes a great pride in them, and spends a deal of money, getting the best and the rarest. There now, I have told you all you will

have to do, and it is just easy enough, is it not, child?"

"It sounds so." And with the hopeful temper of youth Hetty had no doubt but that she should find it so too.

"Well, then, the matter is fixed so far," said the widow, as she rose to go. "If Master Wright don't object, all will be straight, and you will get your things ready, and be down at the Abbey Arms by four o'clock, *punctual*, to-morrow afternoon; then you can go by the same carrier who will bring back Martha and her box. Broom Bank is only a short mile beyond Lettsborough, on the London road."

"Broom Bank! what a pretty name! Is that where Mrs. Cape lives?"

"Yes; but mind, child, you must always put the Christian name before her surname, for she don't fancy being called Mrs. Cape; no more she ought, for her brother's widow is Mrs. Cape by right. She is but Mrs. Dorothy Cape, and so she chooses to be called."

"Is she very particular?" asked Hetty, a little alarmed.

"Not more than most maiden ladies are. Every one is particular sometimes, and about some things. We must not look for perfection in the rich any more than in the poor. We are all Eve's grandchildren, you know. I own to having fancies, too, but you are not afraid of me because I am over-particular about certain things, are you?"

Hetty laughed outright at the bare idea of being afraid of the loveable, kind-hearted, little

old widow ; and, as she followed her to the garden-gate, said anxiously, " I hope, I hope so that uncle will not object ; I do so wish to go on my own account, as well as to oblige dear Patty."

" I have not much fear myself, lass ;" and Widow Gray nodded her thanks, as she set off down the lane at a brisk pace.

It was some little time before Hetty could collect her thoughts enough to select the things she would want to take with her ; and when they were sorted, and spread out on the bed, she paused and sighed. After all, she thought, maybe I shan't go. This brought the tears into her eyes. She was ashamed of them ; but to her inexperienced mind, the change from the lonely cottage to the grand house of Broom Bank seemed little less than Paradise itself. And in one respect it would be so : the tempter would be found in this new Garden of Eden, and the entrance into it would give the dearly-bought knowledge of good and evil. But the young girl did not stop to think seriously,—it was not natural that she should, at her age ; but she ought to have remembered her mother's dying words, and looked to God in prayer for direction and strength in this unexpected change in her prospects. This duty was left undone ; and the Bible, from which she was learning a passage by heart at the time the messenger of good news arrived, was hastily closed, and replaced on the shelf. Thus easily, alas ! do we cast away the solace of our sorrowful hours at the approach of worldly prosperity.

Time, which lately had always hung more or less heavy on hand, to-day seemed to stand still. She looked at the clock again and again, to be sure it had not really stopped, so impatient was she for her uncle's return. The fire had to be rekindled, for bacon and cabbage had to be boiled; and luckily Hetty thought of making a pudding-cake, as a surprise for her uncle. Still the minutes passed very slowly. Twice she went as far as the garden-gate to peep down the lane, but no one was yet to be seen. No, to be sure, the punctual postman was never *before* any more than *behind* time. When the right moment came at last, *then* Master Wright made his appearance.

"Dish up," he said, as he passed to his room. Hetty could guess nothing from either the words, or the tone of voice. But the cheerful way in which he said, "Ah! what have we got here, a pudding-cake? a dainty dish, fit for a king," gave her courage to hope that all would be as she wished. Grace was said, and the dinner eaten with a relish. The pudding-cake was pronounced so good, that it must have been made by "mother's" receipt. Hetty felt proud and pleased, and almost resolved to ask the question uppermost in her mind, but she checked herself; and it was not long before her uncle said, "You have had a visitor, lass; what say you to the widow's proposal?"

"I like it of all things, if —"

"That's enough; then you shall go. I only wanted to be sure that it was your *own* wish, my Hett."

"Quite my *own* wish, indeed, thank you, uncle."

"I will, then, speak to the carrier to-night, and you can start to-morrow."

"That was what Mrs. Gray wished."

"Hark'ee, lass! I am not thinking of the widow or her daughter, but of *you*. Is it on their account, or on your *own*, that you wish to go?"

"On my own, uncle."

"So then let it be." No more was said on the subject.

At night the portion of Scripture read was the last chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. It was chosen because it mentioned the duties of servants. In the prayer that followed, a special blessing was asked for the young girl, that she might have grace and strength granted her to fit her for the discharge of her new duties. A hearty "God be with you!" was added by the uncle to his usual "good night," and a short word of advice given.

"Remember, child, that the lady you have undertaken to serve is *blind*. Though her eyes cannot be upon you, God seeth always. Let not your service be *eye* but *heart* service."

With these solemn words still sounding in her ears, Hetty lay down on her bed, but not at once to sleep. She had thought that Mrs. Dorothy Cape's want of sight would make her service the more easy, but it was plain her uncle took another view of the case. Who was right? While trying to answer this question, she fell asleep,—the sound, refreshing sleep of youth and health.



CHAPTER V.

WE will now follow Hetty to Broom Bank, and see how she gets on there. Were her new and untried duties really found to be easier and pleasanter than those she had been so eager to get rid of?

The young girl was much struck, and somewhat awed, by the outward grandeur of her new situation. The cast iron entrance-gate; the drive up to the house through a lawn-like meadow, ornamented with clumps of fine trees,

and surrounded with a belt of flowering shrubs, all gay with blossoms, and fragrant from the shower which had just fallen; the courtyard; the large servants' hall into which she was taken on her first arrival; the smart footman, with his powdered head, and green and red livery; the housekeeper, in a silk gown and lace cap, who might have been mistaken for Mrs. Dorothy herself;—all this made Hetty feel fairly bewildered; and she would have run back to the carrier, or burst into tears, if the sound of Patty's merry voice, and the sight of her friendly face, had not at that moment quieted her fears, and given a happy turn to her thoughts. But Patty had only time to give a very few cheering words and hearty thanks; the carrier's horse was hot, and he did not like to wait; and as soon as Martha Gray's box was safely lodged in the back of the cart, she was called for. In she got very willingly, with the prospect of her well-earned holiday before her.

But to return to Hetty. She trembled not a little as she stood before the housekeeper, and answered her inquiries; but she was able to do this satisfactorily, and Mrs. Andrews kindly said, "You have answered all my questions very properly, your manner is quiet and respectful, and your voice low and soft; all this is in your favour, so you need not be frightened. Mrs. Dorothy Cape will, I think, take a fancy to you, then all will be well." Hetty made her best curtsy,—she still felt as if she were speaking to a lady,—and she humbly thanked Mrs. Andrews, and hoped she should give satisfaction.

Encouraged by the housekeeper's kind manner, this was spoken with a greater degree of confidence, and some spirit. Mrs. Andrews was pleased, and good-naturedly observed that Hetty's long ride would make a cup of tea acceptable. She was just going to pour out her own, and said Hetty might have one with her. The young girl felt this kind thoughtfulness, and modestly seating herself at the furthest end of the table, she waited, with longing lips, for the promised refreshment. Scarcely had she tasted the tea when the sound of a bell was heard, and the footman informed Mrs. Andrews that his mistress wished to see the new waiting-maid. "We must leave our dish of tea till we come back; for Mrs. Dorothy Cape must not be kept waiting. Follow me," said the housekeeper. Hetty did so, her surprise increasing as they went on. The long passage which divided the offices from the rest of the house; the lofty entrance-hall, with its huge gilt and coloured glass lamp; the spacious dining-room, with its crimson curtains, and rich Turkey carpet,—they had to pass through this room, to reach the smaller apartment beyond, where Mrs. Dorothy was that evening sitting,—all seemed to revive the village girl's first fears, and to increase her feeling of awe. But all was forgotten when she stood in the presence of her future mistress.

The room was so darkened, that at first nothing could be seen distinctly, and a chill crept over the young girl's heart. If she was

to live always in the dark, it would be like living in a prison!

Mrs. Dorothy spoke in a half-whisper to the housekeeper, and then, in a louder tone, bid Hetty draw near. "I am told you wish to have the honour of waiting upon me," began the old lady, in rather a stately voice; "if so, you have but one thing to attend to—*my wishes*; these must be *your laws*. I am rich, and when I choose I can be liberal: your reward will depend entirely upon your behaviour. Have you any thing to say? If so, you may speak."

A nod from the housekeeper gave Hetty courage to say that she hoped she should be able to give satisfaction; it should be her endeavour to please the lady. The smile of the housekeeper and the "very well" of the mistress were satisfactory, and Hetty was dismissed with an injunction to return the instant she had taken off her bonnet.

Mrs. Andrews led the way to the room which was to be the young girl's own—the same which had been Patty's. It was a light closet within Mrs. Dorothy's bed-room: the door was always left open at night, in case the old lady should require assistance. The smart little French bed, with its pink and chintz hangings, and white coverlid, drew from the village girl an artless expression of surprise. "And did Patty really sleep in this beautiful bed?" she asked doubtfully: "we might well call her Queen of Nutstead."

No other answer was given than the timely

admonition that "being treated like a lady did not make a lady," and that "humility would better become Mrs. Dorothy Cape's waiting-girl than the airs of a young lady." The house-keeper added good-humouredly, "While you take off your things, my dear, and wash the dust from your face, and smooth your hair, I will step down and fetch up your cup of tea; you shall not lose that, I am determined. But it will not do to keep Mrs. Dorothy Cape waiting; that is never *her wish*, so set that down in your memory as one of *your laws*."

The cup of tea was a kindness Hetty was really thankful for. She had in the fuss and agitation of starting scarcely eaten any dinner, and she had been very sorry to have had to leave her cup of tea, and slice of nice bread and butter.

"Notice your way now," said the house-keeper, as they returned to the sitting-room; "you will not always have a guide, and the house is large and rather rambling."

Hetty did as she was bid, and hoped to have no difficulty, as she was always clever at finding her way across the country.

"Well, young woman," said the stately Mrs. Dorothy to Hetty, who again stood abashed before her, "fetch a book, and let me hear how you can read."

"The Bible, ma'am?" asked the girl in a humble voice.

"The Bible? No. The Bible in a proper way and at a proper time; any book will answer

my purpose now. Take one from the book-case."

Unfortunately for Hetty the glass door of the bookcase was locked. When informed of the fact, Mrs. Dorothy exclaimed, "Impossible! Patty would never have forgotten to leave the key; Patty who never forgot any thing."

True enough the key was hanging on its proper hook by the side of the bookcase; but the room being dark, Hetty did not see it. On looking about, however, she discovered a book on the side-table. Alas! it was very small print, and she could not see to read it in the darkened room. She asked leave, in a trembling voice, to pull up one of the blinds; but Mrs. Dorothy answered very shortly, "No, it is *my wish* that you never do that, whether I am in the room or out of it; do you hear?"

"Yes, ma'am," and Hetty dropped a curtsy instinctively in the presence of this grand lady.

"Then why don't you answer? Patty always did. I am afraid you are of a sulky disposition. If you don't choose to read, you had better say so at once, and leave the house."

"Indeed, ma'am," began Hetty, in a deprecating tone.

"Silence!" interrupted the old lady, more and more ruffled; "give me the white kitten: I will amuse myself with that for a while."

Poor Hetty! her patience well nigh forsook her; but she thought of the blind lady's sad infirmity; and she thought "how vexed Patty will be, if I am sent away, and she is obliged to

come back:" so she set about looking for the kitten. In vain she looked round the room, and under the sofa and chairs,—no cat nor kitten could she find. I believe she would fairly have cried with vexation, if a faint mew-ing had not reached her ears just in time, and betrayed pussy's hiding-place. A closet in the wainscot was fitted up with green baize, and a snug bed made in the corner, where Mrs. Lily and her two kittens lay: one perfectly white, without a spot of any colour; the other as pure a black. Hetty was lost in admiration at the pretty sight, and uttered an exclamation of such delight, that Mrs. Dorothy forgave her the fit of supposed obstinacy; but a scream followed, for the cat scratched Hetty's hand as soon as she attempted to take out the kitten, and set it bleeding from the wrist to the knuckles. Mrs. Dorothy was much agitated.

"What is the matter?" she asked: "have you hurt the kitten?"

"No, ma'am; it's only *me* that's hurt; the cat's claws are so very sharp. I beg your pardon, ma'am, for calling out."

"Oh! is that all?" answered the old lady quite coolly; "puss never scratched Patty: it must have been quite your own fault. Give me my kitten, or, if you are afraid, come here, let me lean on your arm; I will soon settle this matter."

Hetty willingly gave her arm; and, thus assisted, Mrs. Dorothy walked to the closet, and, putting her hand in, she at once selected the right kitten. How she knew it from its little

black companion was a wonder to Hetty, who did not notice that the white one had a ribbon round its neck, which the other had not, and she stood more in awe than ever of Mrs. Dorothy's superiority.

The butler now came in with candles, and informed his mistress that Mr. Drayton was below, and wished to know if it would be agreeable for him to come up. "Yes," was the answer; "ask him to come up." Hetty retired to the further end of the room, where she was desired to sit quite still till she was wanted.

When left quiet, Hetty had some difficulty in keeping the tears from her eyes. When she thought of going to service, she had only thought of liberty, and variety, and independence; she had never reflected on the difficulties and trials which meet us every where in this world: nor had she remembered to seek for help and guidance where alone it can be found. At this very moment, instead of thinking over all the grievances of the last few hours, and reproaching herself with ever having wished to leave her uncle's quiet, if dull home, to serve a poor blind lady, so fanciful and difficult to please, Hetty should have prayed to God to give her grace to persevere in the path of duty, and to forgive her for the fretfulness and discontent she had before shown.

The curate's departure was the signal for tea. The door was thrown wide open by the smart footman, and the butler placed a silver tray on the table. Both servants left the room.

Hetty found that she was expected to pour

out the tea and hand the muffin. Mrs. Dorothy pronounced the first cup too sweet, and the second not sweet enough, as Patty did not make either. But Hetty acquitted herself very well upon the whole, neither upsetting the cream-jug, nor scalding the kitten, which still lay in Mrs. Dorothy's lap, and which had very nearly received the contents of the first cup of hot tea over its back, from the saucer not having been properly wetted.

When Mrs. Dorothy had finished her own tea, she told her little waiting-woman that she might make her supper on what was left, as she did not approve of young girls taking their meals in the servants' hall with the men.

This Hetty thought a great honour, to eat and drink in the presence of a lady in such grandeur; — silver tea-pot, glass cream-jug, and real china cup and saucer! But after the two little bits of remaining muffin and the very delicate slices of bread and butter had been eaten, the young villager felt that it was, after all, but an empty honour, and that a good cut from the loaf and cheese that her uncle was supping off would have been a more satisfactory supper for a hungry, healthy girl; and, perhaps, the thanks she offered to God would have been more hearty also. At any rate the surrounding grandeur had not made her forgetful of this duty, the habit of which had first been formed by her mother, and since fostered by her uncle. Hetty had been, in all respects, carefully trained and educated; but she had yet to learn to act steadily upon religious principles. She was of a meek,

timid disposition, and was too easily influenced by her companions, and too soon cast down by small troubles ; she did not yet feel that trust and confidence in the care and guidance of her heavenly Father which can alone produce within us the feeling of peace and contentment, and give us strength to resist all temptation.

When the butler and footman came to remove the tea-things, Mrs. Dorothy inquired, in some anxiety, for her favourite "Dash ;" she hoped he had not followed Patty. Samuel, the footman, went in search of the pet lap-dog, and soon returned with the fat spaniel, who came panting up to his mistress.

"It is *my wish*," said Mrs. Dorothy, addressing her new waiting-woman, "that Dash shall be your particular charge, so long as you are one of my domestics. I hope you are not as much afraid of dogs as of cats, young woman ?"

Hetty was glad to say that she was very fond indeed of dogs. This judicious answer satisfied the old lady, who was foolishly devoted to her pets, at least so many thought ; but Hetty was ready to excuse this, when she considered the sad infirmity which made her so dependent on others for amusement, and which deprived her of so many common employments. The rest of the evening was passed in caressing the dog and the kitten, and in winding a skein of wool, when a new piece of knitting was begun. Fortunately Hetty had learnt to knit at school, and could take up the stitches when they were dropped, "as Patty did so cleverly," she was told.

Soon after tea Hetty was desired to fetch the

Bible and book of prayers, which she would find on Mrs. Dorothy's dressing-table. It was quite a relief to quit the room, after so many hours of fear and constraint; and the young girl, in her haste and her joy, took the wrong turn, and soon found herself she knew not where. First she tried one way, then another, till she came to a back staircase; this she ventured up, hoping it would lead by some other way to Mrs. Dorothy's room. At the top of the landing-place there was a door, but it was locked, and she was going down the stairs again, when she was startled by a gruff voice, asking her "What business she had there, amongst the men's bed-rooms?"

"I have lost my way!" faltered out the young girl, thoroughly frightened.

"Then find it again, you little wild goose," answered the same gruff voice; "and let me never catch you here again, or I'll tell Madam Andrews of you, that's for certain!"

Hetty heard but too plainly what was said, but she did not see who spoke. The old coachman was without his wig, and took good care not to be seen. Had he been good-natured, and not surly, he might have saved her further trouble. After Hetty got clear of the dangerous staircase, she tried another way, and hearing voices,—women's as well as men's voices,—she ventured to knock at the door; it was opened by the page-boy. As the common wag of this large family of servants, he saluted Hetty with a low bow, and begged that "the

ghost of the departed Miss Martha Gray would honour him with her commands!" The shout of rude laughter which burst from the servants' hall supper table at this specimen of wit, fortunately for Hetty, brought Mrs. Andrews to inquire what could be the reason of such an uproar. Poor Hetty's flowing tears and face of distress made her command silence with double authority. Then taking the terrified girl by the hand, she led her away, and bid her tell her how she came there. Fortunately for Hetty she was accustomed to speak the truth; she checked her tears, and told the simple, honest truth, not even concealing or slurring over the mistake of climbing up the back staircase, or the reproof she got from some one, she could not tell who, for so doing.

Her truthfulness and openness gained her the good opinion of the housekeeper, who said kindly that she would herself show her the way; and she did so, without even reminding Hetty that she had bid her take notice of the turn, when she showed her first to her mistress's room. The girl's ready confession, "I was careless and stupid to lose my way, ma'am," instead of any false excuse, or silly attempt to defend herself, disarmed the housekeeper of all remaining vexation. When they reached the foot of the front staircase, the loud and violent sound of the sitting-room bell announced that Mrs. Dorothy's patience was quite exhausted.

"I will go and pacify my mistress, while you fetch the books, my dear," said the kind An-

draws; "but mind, now, don't go wrong again. Straight upstairs, then turn to your right, and open the second door on your left."

By the time Hetty returned with the books all had been explained to the old lady, and the good housekeeper went back to finish her supper; and with the Bible and book of prayers before her, Hetty only waited for directions. None being given, she asked respectfully, "Please, ma'am, what chapter shall I read?"

"Not a chapter at all, only a few verses. It is late; I have been kept so *very* long waiting."

Still Hetty was puzzled, till the old lady added in a testy tone, "Choose one of the short parables. How many directions you require! half a word was enough for Patty, she was so quick and intelligent."

The Parable of the Tares, as related by St. Matthew, was read, and then Hetty paused; no further direction was given, so she ventured to say, "Which prayer, ma'am, please?"

"That for Saturday evening, to be sure."

After prayers, Hetty conducted her blind mistress carefully up the stairs. The bell was rung to summon Andrews, who was lady's-maid as well as housekeeper, and Hetty was dismissed with a strong injunction not to sleep *too sound*, but to be on the alert to answer the least sound of the silver hand-bell, which was always placed at night within reach of her mistress.

Seldom had the young girl felt more weary. Often she had done a harder day's work, and felt more tired in body; but never had she before experienced such weariness of mind, from such a

series of worries; nothing had seemed to go right or straight since she had come into the house. She was sure she should never be able to please the old lady. Poor Patty would be sent for back again, Widow Gray would be vexed, and uncle would think it was all her fault. Hetty's heart was full, and her pillow was soon wet with her tears. She was still awake, when her room door was quietly opened by Andrews, who looked in to see that her candle was safely extinguished. Noticing Hetty's tears, she whispered kindly in her ear, "Don't fret, my dear; all will be right to-morrow: I hope the worst is over. Poor dear lady! it was a great trial to her to lose Patty. I shall leave the door ajar for you to hear the bell. You'll be sure to answer it quick, won't you?"

"Oh, yes!" said Hetty; "I wake easily, and was used to get up and down to tend on mother."

It was a comfort to Andrews to hear this, and she wished Hetty a kind "good night."

How grateful were these few words of human sympathy! how much greater comfort would reliance on divine aid, and an earnest prayer for greater strength and patience, have imparted! Alas! that was forgotten.

That night Mrs. Dorothy was nervous and fidgety. It had been a day of real suffering to her, and we must not be hard upon her, but must rather pity her. Accustomed as she was to have every wish and fancy attended to, it was a great evil to lose one on whom she was so dependent for comfort as on Martha Gray. Patty

was a very great favourite, and after having lived two years with her mistress had completely learnt her ways, and knew well how to please her. It was not to be wondered at, then, that Mrs. Dorothy, feeling nervous and fidgety, was also wakeful. Once she rang her bell to know if the night-lamp was burning properly ; she fancied it smelt as if it was going out. Another time she woke with an uneasy dream ; she thought Dash was killing the white kitten, and she called Hetty to give her some lavender-drops. When the old lady showed by her breathing that she was asleep, Hetty crept back to her bed. The stable-clock struck three o'clock as she did so, but after that both she and her mistress slept soundly till seven, the hour at which the young girl had been desired to rise.



CHAPTER VI.

SUNDAY.

HETTY woke with a weight on her mind. The sun shone brightly in at her window, as if to greet the sacred day. The reflection on the pink lining of the chintz furniture recalled to the young girl's mind the sad reality of her day-dream of happy independence. She had only time to collect her bewildered thoughts, when the loud stable-clock struck the hour of seven. In a moment Hetty left her comfortable bed,

and softly closing the open door which led into Mrs. Dorothy's room, dressed herself, made the bed, and put all things tidy, before Mrs. Andrews appeared, who commended her diligence, and smiled her approbation.

"Now, my dear, put on your shawl and bonnet, and follow me on tiptoe."

Hetty did as she was bid. She and her guide passed through the room of her sleeping mistress without disturbing her, and on reaching the hall door Hetty was told that she was to consider it her business every morning at this hour to give Dash his early walk.

"You will always find him on the mat, waiting for you," observed the housekeeper. "Samuel has the charge of the dog at night, and will put him there before eight."

"Which way am I to go, ma'am, and how long am I to be out?" asked the girl very sensibly, and anxious to avoid further misfortunes.

"Oh! you have only to follow Dash; he knows where to go, and when to come back."

The freshness and brightness of the morning were not lost upon the young girl; she greatly enjoyed her walk, and admired the park even more than she had when she drove through it in the carrier's cart. It was no punishment to her to stand still now and then to wait the pleasure of the dog; and though she felt a little uneasy when Dash turned into a side-path, yet, recollecting her orders, she followed, and trusted to him to lead her right. After sauntering along, they came to a shady moss-house, and as the dog lay down on a mat apparently placed for him,

Hetty sat down on the bench. The hum of the bees round some lilacs reminded her of her uncle's garden and her favourite hive. "What would *he* be doing?" she asked herself; and then, for the first time, she remembered that it was Sunday, and she repeated to herself the little hymn which her mother had taught her when a child. The words of this hymn I will write down, as some other young girl may like to learn it.

HYMN FOR SUNDAY.

This is God's own day of rest,
When we love and praise Him best;
Now no work is done,
But every one
Is dressed
In his best,
In honour of God's holy day;
Now we meet to sing and pray,
And soon the church's bell will ring,
That all God's people, every where,
May know the hour of prayer.
Every day we love and praise Him,
But this is God's own day of rest,
When we love and praise Him best.

Hetty's mind was afterwards occupied in trying to answer the questions, "Shall I be allowed to go to 'church?'" and "What sort of church will it be?" Before she had answered these questions, Dash looked up and wagged his tail, to show he was ready to go on. Hetty spoke to the creature kindly, and patted him without any fear; the animal was perfectly docile and good-tempered. Again he set out, and brought her to the hall-door from whence they

started. The dog curled himself round on his mat, and his attendant, rightly supposing her duty to be fulfilled, left him below, and went upstairs. Hetty took off her things, and it was then time for breakfast. Mrs. Dorothy, not having slept well, took hers in bed; Hetty was to wait upon her, while the housekeeper went down to eat her own. In the dressing-room adjoining every thing was prepared; and to the young girl's great delight, besides the coffee and delicate dainties laid out for her mistress, a small loaf and a good-sized jug of new milk were also placed on the table.

The old lady's appetite was soon satisfied, and the hungry girl, with hers sharpened by the morning air and exercise, sat down with a thankful spirit, which made her add a few words of praise to God, as she asked his blessing on the food before her. She ate till she was fully satisfied; the old lady had dozed off, and there was nothing to hinder or hurry the young girl, who, recollecting how nearly supperless she went to bed the night before, felt half inclined to pocket a slice of the bread, to prevent a similar misfortune. But she did not do so; there was something too much like stealing in it. "Mother," she thought, "would not have done so."

Just as Hetty had comfortably concluded her breakfast, the tinkle of the silver bell called her to her mistress's bed-side.

"Have you eaten your own breakfast?" asked Mrs. Dorothy.

"Yes, thank you, ma'am, and enjoyed it very much," was the hearty reply.

A smile was visible on the old lady's countenance at this specimen of the cottage girl's simplicity, as she gave her directions for the preparation of Dash's breakfast.

"Cut a slice off the loaf, free from crust; soak it five minutes in hot water; strain the water off carefully, and mash up the bread with a spoon; then pour over plenty of milk. You will find a basin, spoon, loaf, and jug of new milk on a tray by itself; that is put for Dashy."

Hetty trembled to think how nearly she had devoured the lap-dog's breakfast, while mistaking it for her own. Luckily there was still some milk left, and a good bit of bread; more than enough, as it turned out, for when set before the dog he scarcely touched it; and the housekeeper, who just then came into the room, whispered in Hetty's ear that she might make friends with pussy by giving her the rest, and that she need not make quite so much another time.

After Andrews had finished dressing her mistress, Hetty was called to attend the old lady round the garden; Dash followed his mistress, and the page was also in attendance. Mrs. Dorothy Cape evidently liked state. She had been born in India, and lived there with her father long after she was grown up. Let us hope that *habit*, more than *pride*, was the reason of her stateliness, and her love of pomp and ceremony.

The garden was indeed a choice one, and at this time full of beautiful flowering shrubs, and gay with tulips and other spring flowers. Hetty was so delighted that an exclamation of joyful

surprise escaped her, "Why this is the Garden of Eden itself!"

Mrs. Dorothy was evidently pleased.

"And so it ought to be," was her reply, "for it costs a mint of money. If it was not for my large fortune, it would be impossible to keep it up in this style. Do you see the gardener any where about?"

"No, ma'am; there is a gentleman coming out of the greenhouse, though." Hetty, in her simplicity, could not fancy such a well-dressed person could be a gardener, even in his Sunday clothes. She was thinking of her uncle's blue apron, flannel jacket, and straw hat.

"A gentleman coming out of the greenhouse! Why, you stupid girl, that must be Malcolm himself."

The page was appealed to, who decided that it was the gardener.

"Shall I call him, ma'am?" asked the boy.

"Ask no impertinent questions, James; wait till you receive orders before you execute them."

The boy only shrugged his shoulders at this rebuke. His mistress could not see his mocking gesture, but God's eye was upon him.

"This is eye-service," thought Hetty.

"Lead the way to a bench, child; I wish to sit down."

"Would you like a sunny or a shady one, please, ma'am?" asked Hetty, a little afraid if the question might be called impertinent; but no, the old lady was pleased, and answered almost kindly, "A very thoughtful and proper ques-

tion, like one of Patty's. I prefer a seat in the shade."

Mrs. Dorothy was soon seated. Dash lay at her feet, and the page stood behind her, trying to make the little waiting-maid laugh, by making the most ridiculous grimaces. But Hetty felt no inclination to laugh; she remembered this young fellow's saucy behaviour to her last night, and turned her head another way.

"Now, child," said Mrs. Dorothy, "while I rest here, go to the '*gentleman*,' as you call him, and tell him I wish to taste his strawberries,—only half-a-dozen or so. I dare say you will find him in the hot-house behind the greenhouse."

True enough Malcolm was in the hot-house, and Hetty gave the message. The smell and sight of the pots of ripe strawberries made her mouth water. What was her surprise, when desired to tell Mrs. Dorothy that "Malcolm was sorry that there were none he could gather till after Wednesday!"

"Sir!" exclaimed Hetty, as if either her eyes or her ears must deceive her. The message was repeated in the same words, the hot-house door was locked, and the gardener disappeared through a gate in the garden-wall. This made the strange message still stranger. Hetty gave the message to her mistress in the very words the gardener had made use of; but she was not quite easy in her mind, and her tone of voice showed that she thought there was something wrong. The old lady perceived this, and said, "Malcolm means there are none ripe for *me*."

These Horticultural Shows are a bore after all. If Malcolm had not got the prize last month for early rhubarb, I suppose I should have been allowed to eat my first strawberries in peace." Rising from her seat and pursuing her walk, she went on to say, "You perceive, young woman, that even rich people are obliged to make sacrifices."

"Indeed, ma'am, if you will allow me to say so, it does seem odd that *you* should not have the first and the best of your own fruit."

"A very fair observation for an ignorant girl, who knows nothing about the honour of winning prizes at the Horticultural Shows. Pray did you ever gain a reward at school, child?"

"Yes, ma'am, once or twice," said Hetty modestly.

"And proud and pleased enough you were, were you not?"

"I can't say but what I was, ma'am."

"Very well, then ; now I can explain. Winning prizes for fruit and flowers at the shows is to Malcolm what gaining your school rewards was to you."

"But then, ma'am, if I am not too bold to say so——" and the girl hesitated.

"Go on," said Mrs. Dorothy.

"Please, ma'am, I was going to say that still it seems wrong. Mr. Malcolm gets the prize, but you, ma'am, lose your fruit, and gain nothing."

"No ; I too have my reward in the pleasure of the congratulations of my friends, and the

envy of my enemies. I like to *triumph* as much as Malcolm."

Hetty did not think this sounded quite right ; but just then they came opposite to the greenhouse, and stood to enjoy the scent of the flowers. Mrs. Dorothy did not go in, for the door was locked, but she said to Hetty, "I smell pinks, I am sure I do. Look in, child, are there not pinks in bloom?"

Yes, there were, and so close to the open window that Hetty could easily have reached one, if Mrs. Dorothy would have let her ; but no, they too were for the Wednesday's show, and she would not have them gathered unless Malcolm had been there.

The page, who was close behind, seemed not to hear this ; for he thrust his hand in between the bars, and plucking the finest placed it in his button-hole, nodding at his poor blind mistress with a saucy air of triumph : another plain proof that his service was that of the eye, not of the heart.

Soon after this the house-bell sounded the signal of preparation for church. Dash and the page were dismissed to order the carriage round. The foolish fellow dropped down on one knee, and offered the stolen pink as a peace-offering to Hetty. Of course she rejected it, and noticed that the flower was not put again in the button-hole, but hid away in his pocket out of sight.

When they came in Mrs. Andrews was in attendance to receive her mistress, and good-

naturally contrived to whisper in Hetty's ear, "You are to go in the carriage, and sit in the pew with Mrs. Dorothy; so run and fetch your Prayer Book."

These few words threw the young girl into a great fuss, and no small alarm. She had doubted whether she should be allowed to go at all; and now to be told only a minute beforehand that she was to go in a carriage, and sit in the quality pew, it was enough to confuse her. But if, while she looked for her book, she had offered up only a few words in prayer, strength from above might have been given her, and she might have been led to forget the glare of this world's rank and riches in the thought of God's awful presence and majesty. Had she remembered that it was the *Lord's day*, and that it was to *his house of prayer* she was going, the fear of Mrs. Dorothy and the pride of a carriage would have taken less hold on her mind. As it was, her attention was quite distracted, even after she got into church; she could not steady her thoughts. There was another lady in the pew, in widow's mourning; but this need not have disturbed Hetty, as she sat at the further end. She was Mrs. Cape, the widowed sister-in-law of Mrs. Dorothy, whom Mrs. Gray had mentioned. Hetty allowed her eyes to wander all over the church. Mrs. Dorothy's pew was a front seat in the gallery; and the number of well-dressed ladies quite astonished the village girl, who was only accustomed to the quiet, homely congregation of Nutstead. It was not until she turned her back upon the

people to kneel down that she recollected her own duty, and she tried to say her prayers, but it was with a very divided heart. When the Psalms were read she was puzzled to find them, as she had not marked her places beforehand. Mrs. Cape was so kind as to assist her. During the reading of the lessons Hetty's thoughts again wandered, while she turned her head in every direction. The widow lady gently touched her arm, and pointing to the Bible she held in her hand, she offered to share it with her. Hetty, for very shame, kept her eyes on the book; but half the time she was thinking who the lady could be, and why she was so kind to her. When the singing began the lady showed the same friendly interest by sharing her hymn book. Each time Hetty felt more grateful, and each time admired more the sweet, thoughtful, melancholy look the lady had.

On leaving the church the widow lady shook hands with Mrs. Dorothy. "I shall expect you to dinner at the usual time, Mrs. Cape," said the old lady in her stately way.

"Thank you, ma'am; after the second service I will walk up," was the gentle reply.



CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Mrs. Dorothy had finished her luncheon, Hetty was desired to eat her own dinner. She looked with great dismay on the table, covered indeed with cut glass and silver, but without any solid food. A small dish of minced chicken had been provided for the old lady, who ate part of it, and gave the rest to Dash.

Hetty helped herself to the half-cold new potatoes, not much bigger than marbles, and finished the remains of a French roll. It was true there was a cake on the table, but it was

uncut; and though a dish of oranges, and another of roasted apples, was also there, she could not venture to touch either, for she felt sure the fruit was not meant for her.

How was this? you will ask; surely Mrs. Dorothy did not intend to starve her young dependant. Patty, at least, did not look as if she lived on air, she was fat and rosy enough; the housekeeper, too, stout and good-looking; Samuel, if any thing, too fat. Plenty seemed to reign every where. True; but have not you guessed who it was that showed this piece of spite to poor Hetty? If not, I will tell you. It was no other than saucy James: it was *his business* to wait on Mrs. Dorothy's attendant. A plentiful supply of roast beef and plum-pudding had been entrusted to his care by the worthy housekeeper, who, good woman, had that day eaten her own dinner with the greater relish, from the thought how much the young villager would enjoy her Sunday treat.

But James owed Hetty a spite; she had shown herself his superior, and he had promised himself to be revenged. If she chose to look demure when he was bent on making her laugh, and would not join him in deceiving her mistress when he wished it, why he must teach her better. If he was not to be her friend, he would be her enemy. Accordingly, the poor innocent girl's share of the good dinner was put by secretly, and the empty plates laid on the dining-room table by the artful boy when no one was there to see.

When the bell began to ring for afternoon

church, Andrews was allowed to go, but the little waiting-woman was to stay at home, and read the Psalms and lessons to her mistress; after which followed a chapter of a book of travels in the Holy Land.

It was not long after Hetty had begun reading in this book, before she perceived, by the way in which Mrs. Dorothy breathed, that she had fallen fast asleep. She still went on reading aloud, but slower and slower, and more and more softly, so as to sink her voice gradually, as she used to do when reading to her poor mother in her illness; so that she left off without any sudden stop, which will often wake a person.

She went on reading to herself, however, for the book interested her, and there were nice prints which helped to explain what she read. When the old lady woke she took a turn in the garden, only attended by her little waiting-woman.

She paid a very gracious visit to the gardener's wife; talked to her about sending her eldest girl to school; promised the little boy, a chubby, curly-headed fellow of five years old, a book of pictures; and to Patty's little god-daughter she gave a box of sugar-plums in return for a bunch of double violets which the child had gathered and presented to her.

This visit to the gardener's pleased Hetty much; she felt more willing to serve Mrs. Dorothy after seeing her kind to others, and less afraid of her too.

When Andrews returned from church, Mrs. Dorothy went upstairs to dress. Hetty was desired to take Dash his evening walk. "The same way as we went this morning?" she asked.

"No, but follow him; he knows where to go, and when to return." This was true enough; the dog set off quite in another direction, down to the farm-yard, and then by a path across the fields he found his way home again. Hetty was quite pleased with the sagacity of the dog, and congratulated herself upon the pleasant duty of taking him his daily walks. As she passed through the meadow she gathered a handful of sweet clover, and recollected a hymn which had been a favourite with her mother. She was seated on a stile waiting for Dash, who was rolling himself on the fresh grass, repeating the hymn aloud, when she heard footsteps close behind her.

It was the same widow lady she had seen at church in the morning, holding a sweet little girl by the hand. The lady addressed Hetty, saying, "That seemed a pretty hymn you were repeating as we came along; I caught some of the words, and should like to hear them all, if you will oblige me by repeating them."

It would have been impossible to refuse a request made in so kind a manner. Mrs. Cape was afraid of being late, and proposed that, as they were all going the same way, Hetty should repeat the hymn as they went along. She did so.

HYMN.

See those flowers, how bright and sweet,
Just opening to the sun !
They each must ripen seed or fruit
Before their task is done.

Hark to those little birds so gay,
Seeking their daily food !
They cast all future care away,
And trust a bounteous God.

And shall we slight the lesson given
By their kind Lord and ours ?
Less mindful of the will of Heaven
Than birds, or fruit, or flowers ?

As Hetty finished, she offered the little girl her bunch of clover. "It was gathering these sweet flowers that made me think of the hymn, miss."

The child thanked her for the clover, and whispered to her mamma, "May I kiss her? she looks very good-natured." The mother smiled lovingly at her child, and replied, "Yes, dear Fan, if you do not kiss Dash first." There was some danger of this, for the pet lap-dog and the rosy little girl were fond playfellows.

"Are you come to live with Mrs. Dorothy Cape, young woman?" asked the lady.

"Only for a short time, ma'am, while Patty Gray is away."

"Do you know dear Patty," said the child; "and will she soon come back?"

"I hope so," was Hetty's answer.

"You find difficulties in waiting on Mrs. Dorothy Cape, I dare say," observed the widow lady; "but I hope you are kind and attentive.

Blindness is a sad affliction, and no doubt very trying to the temper; I hope you will be patient and gentle."

"Yes, ma'am, I'll do my best. I pity the poor old lady very much indeed."

"That is right and feeling; but you should not call your mistress '*old*;' it sounds disrespectful; at least my sister would think so."

"Thank you, ma'am; I'll not do it again. I should be sorry to be disrespectful to any elderly person, rich or poor: mother was always very strict about that."

"You seem to have been well brought up; but can you bear to be told of a fault, and by a stranger, too?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am! *you* may say any thing. I loved you the first minute I looked in your face; for, if I may be so bold as to say so, you put me in mind of my dear mother."

"Indeed! perhaps she, too, was a widow, and my cap put you in mind of her?"

"She was a widow, ma'am; but it was not your cap, but your kind look, I think, that made me think of mother. Pray, ma'am, don't be offended; for she was only a poor person, and much older—not like in that. I ought not to have said so to a lady like you; I ask your pardon."

Mrs. Cape smiled her forgiveness, and said she was not at all offended.

"Then will you please, ma'am, to tell me the fault you spoke of?"

"Think a little. Can you not guess it, and save me the pain of naming it?"

After a little reflection the young girl answered, blushing, "I am afraid I know, ma'am; it was my bad behaviour at church, was it not?"

"Yes, my good girl, it certainly was; but I see that your conscience has already reproved you. I do not wish to be hard upon you; every thing was strange to you to-day; next Sunday, I dare say, you will be more attentive."

"At least, ma'am, I will try to be so," said Hetty, without making any excuses. She felt really grateful for the friendly interest of the kind lady.

On reaching the house Dash was allowed to go into the parlour, and Hetty was invited by the good housekeeper to join her in a Sunday cup of tea. And right glad was she of the invitation, for it was now six o'clock, and she might well be hungry, having tasted nothing since the dry bread and cold potatoes between one and two o'clock.

She was sorry to notice only one plate of bread of butter. "It was too hot for toast or muffin," Mrs. Andrews observed, as she untied her cap-strings, and began to fan herself with her pocket-handkerchief. The housekeeper only ate one slice of bread and butter; the rest fell to Hetty's share; but she was too well taught to take the last piece, though far from satisfied: and very thankful she was when the good-natured housekeeper went to the cupboard, and brought out a good-sized plum-cake, and, cutting it, handed her young companion a large slice, saying, "It is a pity the cake should get stale.

I thought it would have been cut at luncheon to-day ; but I suppose you had eaten too much roast beef and plum-pudding to care for it then ?”

Hetty looked up quite surprised. “ Ma’am !” she said, “ I did not think of taking so great a liberty, though I should have been most thankful for a bit then ; for, indeed, I had neither meat nor pudding.”

“ No meat or pudding, child ! Why what did you dine on, then ? The oranges and baked apples tempted you, was that it ?”

The housekeeper could hardly believe that the girl spoke truth, when she affirmed that the few new potatoes and half French roll was all that she had eaten. “ Why I cut off, with my own hand, three good slices of beef and a bit of pudding twice as big as that bit of cake you are eating ! Very extraordinary ! Did you look on the sideboard ? that is where the waiting-woman’s dinner is always left.”

Hetty answered that she did not see any thing there ; no one had told her. She was only desired to eat her dinner after Mrs. Dorothy had taken her luncheon.

“ But the oranges and apples, how many of them did you eat ? Tell the truth, my dear, for I sha’n’t scold you, even if you ate them every one, and the dishes too ! A Sunday dinner of dry bread and cold potatoes would have driven me to that at your age.”

The housekeeper smiled good-humouredly, to encourage the young girl to speak the truth.

“ I tasted neither orange nor apple ; I did not

suppose I might, or I should have been pleased to have eaten one of each," was the straightforward answer.

"Then, how many did Mrs. Dorothy eat?"

"None that I know of."

"Humph!" a very meaning *humph* it was, too; for the shrewd housekeeper soon perceived that, as the dishes came back to her nearly empty, some one in the family liked fruit, and was less delicate about helping themselves than the simple, honest village girl. By this time Hetty had drank her second cup of tea, and finished the large slice of cake. "Have a bit more, my good girl, it won't hurt you? it is only plum-bread, not rich and unwholesome," and Mrs. Andrews cut another slice.

"No, thank you, ma'am, not a bit more; I feel quite satisfied, and mother always said 'enough was as good as a feast.'"

"Well, do as you like, only when you are hungry next time, keep your eyes open and look about you. Maybe you will find a supper in your bed-room to-night, so look sharp, and do not be afraid to eat it."

"Bless you and thank you, ma'am, and thanks be to God for his goodness!"

While this grace was said Hetty stood up and joined her hands, as she had been taught to do. A tear was in the housekeeper's eye; though no word was spoken, she praised the pious act in her heart.

A further treat was in store for the village damsel. It was the housekeeper's custom after

tea on Sunday to look into the best drawing-room and spare bed-chambers, to see that the upper housemaid attended properly to this part of her duty. This afternoon Hetty was told she might follow Andrews on her round. Much as the country girl had been astonished before with the grandeur of the mansion of Broom Bank, the best drawing-room beat every thing she had yet seen. She felt as if she could have spent a week in it without being tired of admiring all the grand pictures and beautiful ornaments. There were Indian cabinets, curious shells, and figures cut in ivory; but what delighted her most was a glass case with stuffed humming-birds and gay-coloured butterflies.

The housekeeper was quite amused by watching her surprise and pleasure. Truly the visit to the drawing-room this time was a treat to Andrews also, and she promised Hetty another sight of it next Sunday.

The bed-rooms were as wonderful in their way, and the young girl particularly admired a silk counterpane curiously worked by Mrs. Dorothy's grandmother, and a footstool of painted velvet, Mrs. Dorothy's own work when she was at school.

Over the mantelpiece in this room was a full-length portrait of Mrs. Dorothy, taken when she was eighteen. Hetty could scarcely believe that the poor old blind lady downstairs could ever have been so young and handsome. As she gazed on those fine eyes, fixed so intently, as it seemed, on her own, the tears rolled down her cheeks.

"Oh, Mrs. Andrews," she exclaimed, turning away, "I can't bear to look at that picture; it is so sad to think of the poor dear lady now!"

"Ay, my good girl, it reads us a lesson, as Mr. Drayton observed when he looked at the picture. Poor lady! it was the small-pox which spoiled her beauty and destroyed her sight."

The sound of a bell obliged them to quit the room in haste, for Andrews knew that it was to summon the little waiting-maid to her mistress. Hetty went with alacrity. The sight of the picture left a salutary impression on her mind, so true it is that pity is akin to love.

"Give me your arm," said the old lady to Hetty, as she rose from the dinner table.

"Let *me*, let me lead you, dear Aunt Dora! I will be so *very, very* careful!" cried little Fanny, in a most loving, tender tone.

Mrs. Dorothy could not resist the dear child, but she could not trust so young a guide; so she gave her left hand to little Fanny, and leaned with her right on her maid.

"Now I think," she said kindly, "we shall neither run over Dashy, nor tread upon pussy;" adding, when she reached her sofa, "Thank you, good little niece; for a reward I will allow you to fetch me Snowball."

Fanny ran to the closet delighted, and the white kitten was safely deposited in her aunt's lap.

"May I have Black Jetty to play with my own self?" she added in a coaxing way.

"I am afraid, Fan, if you do, puss will not be pleased; she does not like to have both taken

from her. Get my new maid to tell you the story of the kitten with two mothers, which she told me this morning."

Off ran the little girl to Hetty, who was seated at the furthest end of the room.

"Will kind you tell me all about it?" she asked in a winning manner, at the same time jumping on to her knees, and putting her arm lovingly round her neck.

Mrs. Cape took up a book, and Mrs. Dorothy composed herself for a nap, and Hetty amused the little girl with these stories.

"Farmer Browne, who lives in our village, Miss Fanny, had two cats, one called Tabby, the other Smut. They both had kittens about the same time. Tabby's young ones were born first, and all drowned but one. A fortnight after Smut had hers, and all were destroyed, not one left."

"Oh, how very cruel! but go on."

"Yes, dear, it was cruel, and the poor cat was so distressed; for by some mistake the little kittens were left with her for a whole day before they were drowned, so she would not be satisfied."

"Is it worse, then, to let them live for a day or two?" asked Fanny.

"Yes; if they are taken away at once, the cat does not miss them nearly so much. Poor Smut went roaming about the house, mewing piteously, and looking every where for her little ones. When she could not find her own, she took to Tabby's little one."

"Poor thing! I like her for that. Tell me the rest."

"It was droll enough, Miss Fanny, I assure you, to see Smut trying to lug the big kitten, a fortnight old, about by the neck, as cats carry their young in their mouths when they are just born."

"How very funny! but would Tabby let her do that?"

"Yes; she never seemed to mind it, the black cat managed so cleverly. At first she used only to lie down by the side of Tabby and her kitten; then, after a while, she would watch her opportunity, and when the little one was left alone Smut took its mother's place, and after a few days the kitten was left entirely to her, Tabby even fighting the little one away from her. Its second mother nursed it and coaxed it till it was quite grown up, and a most beautiful kitten it was; so strong and playful, and such a size! twice as big as kittens usually are."

"Thank you, thank you," said Fanny, when she found the story was ended. "Have you one about a dog to tell me? I am so fond of dogs!"

"Yes," answered Hetty kindly; "I can tell you a curious story of a dog. My mother once lived in a Quaker family, where a favourite spaniel was kept."

"What! like Dash?" interrupted the little girl.

"Yes, like Dash. He was not allowed to come into the sitting-room, but lay on the mat in the passage. After the parlour dinner he was accustomed to go down into the kitchen to be fed, and the cat was in the habit of eating off the same plate and at the same time with the dog.

One day mother proposed that the plate should be put in the back kitchen, as puss often made a mess by dragging her portion off on to the clean boards. This was done; but the dog was so offended by it that he would neither eat his own share, nor allow puss to eat hers, but drove her away when she attempted it, and kept guard himself over the plate."

"Poor little dog! I hope they moved it for him."

"After a time the dog was inquired for, and my mother coaxed him all she could to eat his dinner, and follow her upstairs. Not he, indeed; he would do neither the one nor the other; but lay there in the back kitchen by the side of the untasted meat; and there he remained from two o'clock in the day till ten at night, and then mother gave in, and put the plate in the usual place in the front kitchen."

"And would he eat it then?"

"Oh yes! but first he went and fetched the cat, and then they ate their meat together."

"That was very sensible of him, to go and fetch poor pussy."

"So mother thought; and she was so pleased with him for this, that she allowed him afterwards to have his dinner as usual in the front kitchen."

These two stories delighted the child, who became quite familiar with Hetty, chatting away about her doll, and "Mamma's tame bullfinch," but always taking care to speak low, not to disturb "Auntie Dora."

Half an hour passed pleasantly in this way,

and then the old lady awoke, and asked her sister-in-law to favour her with a little music.

"Most willingly," was the reply; "I will begin with your favourite, 'Sound the loud timbrel.'"

"Hush!" said little Fanny, "mamma is going to sing." She sprang from Hetty's knee, saying, "Come and hear her."

"No, dear; I must sit here, but you may go."

The child, however, insisted upon drawing Hetty to the piano, whispering in her mother's ear, "I have forced her to come and hear you sing, mamma."

A nod of consent was the only answer, as the widow lady continued her song.

The young village girl listened quite breathless with pleasure and surprise; she had never heard a piano before, nor such beautiful singing. Mrs. Dorothy also listened with evident enjoyment, and said heartily it was quite a treat.

"Do you sing?" Mrs. Cape asked, looking kindly up at Hetty.

"I used at school and at church, ma'am; but I don't call that singing after listening to you, ma'am," was the modest reply.

"Fie, child! you must not learn to flatter, that is wrong." Though the words were a reproof, yet the smile on the widow's face showed that she was more amused than angry. She began playing the Evening Hymn. "You know that tune, and the words also, I dare say, do you not?"

"Yes, ma'am ; we learnt that at school, and it is often sung at Nutstead Church."

"Well, then, sing it now with me."

"No, please, ma'am, don't bid me do it, for indeed I can't, I should be so frightened."

"Not if you shut your eyes, and fancy yourself at church, singing to praise God, not to please me."

The smile and the widow's cap again strongly reminded the young girl of her mother, and she at once obeyed, at first so timidly that Mrs. Cape could hardly hear her voice. The kind lady sang loud herself on purpose to give her courage, and little Fanny whispered, "I can't hear ; do let me hear. Jane sings loud to me ; why won't you ?"

After the second verse Hetty gained more confidence, and acquitted herself so well towards the end that Mrs. Dorothy asked if there were not two voices singing.

"Yes," her sister-in-law answered ; "for I find your new waiting-woman has learned to sing at school."

"Ah, like Patty !" was Mrs. Dorothy's reply. "What a nice voice Patty has ; but then she is so clever, she can do any thing."

The old hundredth Psalm was then played and sung. Every one knows *that* ; and Hetty got through it so much to Mrs. Cape's satisfaction that another was tried,—Addison's version of the twenty-third Psalm. This hymn had been a favourite with Hetty's mother, and for that reason she sang it with more feeling than either of the

others. Mrs. Dorothy did not choose to say so, though she owned to herself that Patty's voice was neither so soft nor her ear so correct as this girl's.

The piano was now closed, and Aunt Dorothy called little Fanny to her side, saying kindly, "Now, my little Fan, it is your turn to amuse me; let me hear you say one of your pretty hymns."

The little girl's eye brightened with pleasure. "Yes, that I will," she said; "I will say my going-to-bed hymn, because it is almost bedtime, auntie."

"Do so, dearest," said her mother, as she lifted her on to her knee.

"May *she* hear too, mamma?" asked the child, pointing to Hetty, who had retired to her seat at the furthest end of the room.

"Yes, love, I think she ought, as she sang to you. Go and bring her nearer."

HYMN FOR NIGHT.

God has made both day and night,
Darkness and light:
Bright, sunny, cheerful day,
That we may work and play,
And do his holy will;
And night, when all is still,
And He will safely keep
Our weary heads in sleep.
Now, then, let us shut our eyes,
Till the morning bids us rise.
God has made both day and night,
Darkness and light.

"Mamma," whispered the child, as she finished

the last line, "it must be always dark night with——"

Mrs. Cape's finger was held up just in time to stop Fanny from pronouncing her aunt's name, and she said quickly to her sister-in-law, "Do you like that hymn as well as the one for morning?"

"No, not quite; the other is the prettiest, I think. If you are not tired, little Fan, and can remember the morning one, I should like to hear it."

"Does Aunt Dora mean my getting-up hymn, mamma?"

"Yes, love, that which begins "Wake, my child!"

"Oh yes, I can say that!" and she repeated

HYMN FOR MORNING.

Wake, my child! the sun is shining;
Wake, my child! the birds are singing;
Each wakes to do its duty,
And we must do it too.
God loves to see their beauty,
He loves to hear their song;
He loves, my child, that you
Should praise Him with your tongue.
So wake, and kneel to God, and pray
That He may bless you through the day;
And make you good, and wise, and mild,
And love you as his little child.

"Thank you, my little niece. I think that hymn very, *very* pretty; and you say it so correctly that Aunt Dora must give you a reward. Look in this purse: you will find a new sixpence, folded in a bit of white paper, all clean and bright, just as it came from the Mint."

"Thank you, thank you," said the child, delighted to hunt out the sixpence: "oh, it is bright!" she cried; "look, mamma, as bright as your new tea-pot! And I will give it to poor old Kate to buy tea and sugar; shall I, mamma?" she asked in a whisper.

Mrs. Cape now proposed going home, as it was Fanny's bed-time.

Time passed rather heavily after Mrs. Cape left. The old lady asked question after question of the new maid about her poor mother, till the young girl's heart was made to bleed afresh. Mrs. Dorothy could not see the expression of her countenance, or she would have perceived this. The girl's voice at length betrayed the state of her feelings to her mistress, who bid her cheer up, and not fret about what could not be helped. This was poor comfort; not like the pity and consolation which the kind-hearted Widow Gray used to give Hetty; but Hetty wisely tried to cheer up, remembering that Mrs. Dorothy had never known her mother, and could not know how deeply Hetty felt her loss.

Glad, however, the young girl was to hear ten o'clock strike, and to be told to fetch the Bible and Prayer Book. To-night she had time to read the whole chapter, and the prayer for Sunday evening; after which she was allowed to go to rest.

The first thing she saw, upon going into her room, was a large plate of tart and custard, by which stood a mug of milk and a slice of bread. She was not scrupulous this time, but under-

stood that the tart and custard were meant for her, as well as the milk and bread ; and after making a hearty supper she returned thanks to God, and asked his blessing on the friendly housekeeper. The grateful girl intended to keep awake to thank her friend, but long before Mrs. Andrews looked in to see that all was right Hetty's eyes were closed in sleep, peaceful and sweet : neither sighs nor tears had this night left their trace of sorrow behind.



CHAPTER VIII.

HETTY, when a school-girl, had a foolish habit of calling Monday *Black Monday*; she could not, in justice, so call this Monday, for it was decidedly a white day in the calendar of her Broom Bank life.

Mrs. Dorothy was not only getting reconciled to the young stranger, but beginning to fancy she could like her. But even a bright day at Broom Bank had its difficulties and trials, as

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Hetty found, when she was desired to wash and comb Dash, instead of attending his mistress in her morning walk round the garden. Betty, the under-housemaid, provided a large tubful of soap-suds, and Hetty was just going to plunge the dog in, when luckily the housekeeper appeared in time to save spoiling his handsome collar. "Stop, stop!" she cried; "here is the key to unfasten the collar! And, child, are you crazy to think of washing the dog in your black frock? Why he will splash it all over. Hav'n't you a washing cotton one you could slip on for this affair?"

No; Hetty had brought only her black gown.

"Well, then, stay," said the good-natured Mrs. Andrews; "let me think! Yes, one of my jackets will do. Unfasten your frock; I'll soon fetch one."

This Hetty felt was a real kindness; but she was still more obliged to the housekeeper for giving her directions as to the washing of the dog, as she had never washed a dog, nor seen one washed before, and might have made a queer hand of it, but for the assistance of the good-natured Andrews. After the operation Dash was pronounced twice as handsome, and much more pleasant; so it was not time and trouble thrown away.

Now for one of the trials of this day. To some young girls that I know it would have been a real vexation, as it concerned dinner. A leg of cold lamb stood on the side-table, and a plate of cucumber, all sliced, and dressed with vinegar and pepper. Now it so happened that

Hetty was particularly fond of cucumber, and this was the first she had seen this spring. How cool and refreshing too it smelt, after the heat and bustle of her morning's work! Her mouth quite watered to begin, even before her mistress had finished her glass of egg and wine, and sponge-cake.

The order to eat her dinner was no puzzle to-day; she helped herself to the cold meat, and had the spoon in her hand to take some of the wished-for cucumber, when Mrs. Dorothy suddenly exclaimed, "What a smell of vinegar! Are there any pickles in the room, child?"

"No, ma'am; but there is cucumber."

"Ah! then it is that I smell. Put it out of the room directly; I hate the smell of vinegar, unless I am eating it."

Well, now, was I right to call this one of Hetty's trials? If you were as fond of cucumber as she was, hot and hungry like her, how would you have felt when you had to lay down the spoon, and carry off the dainty dish untasted? It must be said, to Hetty's credit, that she bore the *trial* very good-humouredly, and made a very hearty dinner.

After luncheon Mrs. Dorothy ordered the carriage for a drive, and Hetty was told that her attendance would be required; and she looked forward with girlish delight to a ride in the grand yellow coach. You may guess, then, her look of disappointment, when Samuel came back from the stables with the coachman's duty, and he was sorry to say the

bay horse had fallen lame, and was not fit to go out. Mrs. Dorothy was much vexed, but nothing could be done.

As she could not have her drive, she thought it would be a good afternoon to have her drawer of wools sorted and set to rights. The little waiting-woman had to arm herself with patience, for never was there such a heap of confusion;—wools of all sorts and all colours tossed and tangled together! She was bid to part them without breaking the skeins, and wind each into a ball.

If poor Mrs. Dorothy could have *seen* this mass of confusion, she would never have required so unreasonable a thing; but she did not see it, and thought the job only required a fair share of time and patience. Mrs. Dorothy soon fell asleep, and poor Hetty toiled on at her task, wishing that she could change her employment for the old one of darning Uncle Walter's grey stockings!

When she was getting very tired of her task, the sound of distant music made her play truant for a few minutes; she stole softly to the window, and peeped behind the blind. Soon she perceived a man with a hand-organ, and a boy with a monkey. She stood rooted to the spot, watching the tricks and antics of the droll animal, and wishing for little Miss Fanny to share her pleasure, when, alas! the music woke Mrs. Dorothy, and the footman was rung for, and told to send the man away instantly. The man and the organ, however, only went

round to the back door to make fun for James and the maids, but Hetty lost her amusement all the same.

Mrs. Dorothy, roused from her nap, began to inquire how many balls of wool had been wound ; and when Hetty confessed that not one was finished, she received more cross than kind words, and was desired to shut up the drawer, and fetch her bonnet to attend her mistress round the garden. Just then Samuel came in with a card and message from Mrs. Mills, who had called to take Mrs. Dorothy for a drive. Hetty rejoiced at this, for the sake of her mistress ; but as the carriage drove off, the girl's thought was for herself. " And what am I to do now ? " Before she could answer the question James was at her side.

" Now is your time, my dear ; when the cat is away, let the mice play. Follow me to the servants' hall, and you will find music and dancing."

James found himself again mistaken ; for much as Hetty would have liked to have listened to the organ and made friends with the monkey, she would not go with him. She thanked him coldly but civilly ; and saying she had something to do for her mistress, returned to the sitting-room.

Poor Hetty ! the sight of the tangled worsteds did not encourage her, and she was beginning to indulge in one of her discontented and despairing fits, when fortunately Andrews came to look for her. The good housekeeper was pleased to find her still striving over the hopeless job ;

and bidding her be of good courage, for patience and perseverance can conquer all difficulties, she added, "Come with me now, for I have something to show you."

"Very willingly," was Hetty's answer. "There is a boy," continued Andrews, "in the courtyard, with a monkey, and you can see the droll creature's tricks from my window. When you have looked at him, I have a bit of fine work which will suit your young eyes better than my old ones ; will you like to oblige me?"

"*Like!* Oh, Mrs. Andrews! I will do any thing for you at any time with the greatest of pleasure. I am sure, ma'am, I don't know how I should have got on at all without your kindness."

"Say nothing about that; I have only done my duty by you and my mistress ; keeping up your courage was of use to her as well as to you. But see! there is the boy with his monkey."

After the monkey had been fed with fruit and biscuit, and laughed at, till the poor little beast was quite tired, Andrews produced the piece of fine work, and Hetty set to upon it with the zeal of a grateful heart.

Mrs. Andrews sat by, chatting to Hetty in a friendly way, making herself acquainted with the young girl's past history and future prospects ; now and then putting in a useful hint and word of good advice. So the time passed both pleasantly and usefully till the return of the carriage, and then it was time for Mrs. Dorothy to dress, and for Hetty to take Dash his evening walk. "Here," said the kind house-

keeper, "put this orange and bit of cake in your pocket, and enjoy it as you go along the fields."

After dinner the old lady's nap was longer than usual; her drive had tired her. While she slept, the little waiting-woman took up the book of travels, and was well amused, looking at the prints, and reading some of the wonderful accounts. On her mistress awaking, the newspaper was inquired for, and Hetty did her best to read aloud the parts which Mrs. Dorothy asked for.

Nothing particular occurred after this, and the little waiting-maid went to bed, well satisfied with her *White Monday*.



CHAPTER IX.

WE will not dwell on the events of Tuesday. It was a sad day of trial to poor Hetty in many ways. Mrs. Dorothy had a bad night, and awoke with a bilious headache. The day was dark with heavy clouds, and a storm seemed impending. Hetty did her best to cheer her mistress, and was glad when the doctor called and prescribed some medicine to relieve the sickness. The good Mrs. Andrews gave her all the help she could, but the thunder began to growl in the distance, and the poor blind lady was even sensible of the vivid lightning. A

storm of hail and rain followed. Hetty thought of her uncle, for it was the time he was usually out. She thought too of her sailor brother, and she offered up an earnest prayer for the safety of both. When the hail began to clatter against the windows, Mrs. Dorothy became very restless and uneasy. She feared for her greenhouse and hot-houses, and for the prize flowers. Alas! in the evening the gardener came with a sad report; much mischief had been done, and the prize strawberries and prize pinks quite spoilt, owing to the breaking of the glass. Altogether Hetty was more weary this night than she had been before, and went to bed thinking how very foolish she had been to be so discontented with her good uncle, and so eager to try and get into service. It was her fault to think too much of the trials of her daily life, and too little of the blessings, or she would not have forgotten to thank God for having preserved her from danger in the awful storm, and for having enabled her to bear with patience the troubles of the day.

Hetty was glad to wake to a fine, calm day on Wednesday morning, and a great pleasure awaited her. Mrs. Cape sent to inquire after Mrs. Dorothy, and Hetty was desired to return with the messenger, and explain matters, so as to save the necessity of a written answer. She was to take Dash with her to see Miss Fanny, and a box of sugar-plums was added, as a present to the little niece.

With what a light heart and free step did the young girl follow the little boy who had brought

the message! The thought of seeing the smile of the widow lady, and of hearing the sound of her pleasant voice, might well be a happy one to Hetty.

She was received with a kind welcome, and gladly obeyed Mrs. Cape's desire to sit down and rest. Miss Fanny, she said, would soon be back from her walk; and the kind lady was not sorry to have a little chat with the young girl, for whom she had become really interested.

"And so Mrs. Dorothy was much alarmed at the storm, and unwell besides?" observed the lady, after she had listened to Hetty's account of the storm, and her mistress's illness.

"Yes, ma'am. I was so sorry for her, poor lady; she is so helpless. How bad it must be to be blind when you are sick and frightened!"

"Yes, indeed it must! I am glad you seem to feel so kindly towards my poor afflicted sister. I was afraid that her irritable temper and short manner might have made you dislike her."

"No, ma'am. She is very trying at times, for certain; but then I know I do and say many things I ought not, from want of knowing better. And sometimes the good lady is kind and very generous."

"But now tell me, my good girl, were *you* very much frightened at the thunder and lightning?"

"Not exactly frightened, ma'am; but I thought it very awful. It is God's voice, isn't it, ma'am?"

"His work certainly it is; but what makes you think thunder the voice of God?"

"Please, ma'am, because of what is said in the book of Job."

"Can you repeat the words to me?"

"Yes, ma'am, for my mother made me learn them by heart the night of the terrible storm on Christmas eve."

"Let me hear them, will you?"

Hetty repeated from the first to the sixth verse of the thirty-seventh chapter of Job.

"The passage is indeed a striking one, and you have repeated it very correctly. Now tell me if the thought of the thunder being God's voice makes you more or less afraid?"

After a moment's reflection the girl replied, "I think, ma'am, if I was doing what was wrong, it would make me more afraid, but if right less so; for then I should not think God was angry with me."

"You have answered well; and I would advise you, at any time when you are tempted to do wrong, and feel inclined to yield to the temptation, to remember the thunder. The thought of God's awful voice will then be a check upon sin. Can you understand what I mean?"

"Yes, ma'am, I think I do, and thank you," Hetty replied modestly; "I hope I shall not forget it."

Just then the light footstep and merry voice of a child was heard on the stairs, and wide flew open the door, and in rushed Fanny.

"Mamma, my own mamma! here is a rose for you; the first moss rose." Mrs. Cape kissed her darling's fresh, glowing cheek, and said,

"And I have a treat for you, love. See, there, who has come to see you!"

"Kind you, is it kind you?" And she threw her little arms round Hetty's neck, looked her coaxing look, and seated herself on her knee. "Now," she cried, "for the story of puss and her two mothers; tell it."

"I fear I must not stay to tell the story now, dear little miss, for your aunt is ill, and will want me back. But see here! your kind aunt has sent you this pretty glass box."

"Is Aunt Dora very ill? Will she die like dear papa?" asked the child sorrowfully, not even looking at the box of sugar-plums.

"No, dearest," replied her mother, as she wiped the tears from her own eyes, and kissed her child's forehead. "We hope Aunt Dora is only a *little* ill, as Fanny herself was yesterday."

"Oh, that is all! then Auntie will walk in her pretty garden again, and be well and happy to-morrow like me."

"Now, miss, you will open your box, and tell me what to say to your aunt, won't you, like a little dear?"

"I do love her; but I have nothing to give her. Aunt Dora has so many oranges, or I would give her this one; and Aunt Dora has so many flowers, or she should have this nosegay. Aunt Dora has every thing. She has cats too, or I would send her my kitten." The child was silent, as if thinking whether there was any thing else that she could give her aunt, and then exclaimed, "My new picture book! but then she

cannot see. Ah! if I could but lend poor Auntie my eyes; that is the only thing."

"God bless your sweet, tender heart! I wish my mistress could hear you."

"But mind, my good girl, you must not repeat it; but tell Mrs. Dorothy how much Miss Fanny is pleased with her kind present, and give her my kind wishes, and say how sorry I am to hear that she is not well, and that she suffered so much from the storm. Now be particular, give the message correctly, and you will oblige me."

"Then, ma'am, please to let me repeat the words, for fear I should make any mistake."

Fanny gave a last kiss to "fat Dashy doggy," and Hetty set out on her walk back.

That afternoon was the flower-show, and Hetty had much hoped to go there with her mistress, as Mrs. Andrews had told her Mrs. Dorothy usually liked to go. But no! the poor old lady would not go this year, as she had lost the chance of the prizes, and went for a stroll in the garden instead, to hear all the sad mischief that the storm had done.

In the evening Mr. Drayton called to tell Mrs. Dorothy that a man for whom she was interested had gained the cottager's prize for the best kidney potatoes. He told her, too, of several accidents which had occurred the day before in the storm; and thus the conversation turned upon the uncertainty of life, and the trials and temptations to be found in every rank and situation. As the curate noticed that Hetty was listening attentively, he added a word in season for her. "Young women too have

their particular trials, and they must watch carefully over themselves. Their besetting sin is often lightly thought of,—scarcely considered a sin ; I mean the love of dress. But, alas ! this giving way to vanity leads in the end to mischief, and too often to degradation. If they knew their own interest and duty, they would always keep in their station, instead of trying to reach above it ; and then they would be respected not only by their masters and mistresses, but by their fellow-servants. How often would an impertinent footman be kept at a distance, if the housemaid was plain in her dress and modest in her manner ! The two usually go together. Showy dress bespeaks a flippant mind. A vain woman seeks to be admired, and loses the bashfulness which is her safeguard.”

Mrs. Dorothy agreed fully to these remarks of the curate, and spoke rather more severely than he thought kind, as Hetty was present. He turned the conversation, therefore, by saying, “I was going to observe that there is another sin which young girls are tempted to, and which is thought lightly of by many of them,—I refer to the temptation to gluttony. It is a hateful word, but I believe I must use it,—the love of eating what they call good things, as fruit and cakes, and such like. This love of eating often places them in difficulty when they go to service. So many dainty things are left in their way, seemingly so little valued by their masters and mistresses, that they are tempted to steal ; for certainly stealing it is in the sight of God, and in their own secret conscience too : for what

young girl would like to be caught helping herself to fruit in the garden, or carrying off the remains of tarts and sweets from the second course? But," said the curate, "the sound of your clock reminds me of an engagement, so I must say good evening."

The little waiting-maid stepped forward to open the door for the good curate; and her simple "thank you, sir," showed Mr. Drayton that his words of advice had not been lost on her.



CHAPTER X.

THURSDAY was marked by one or two events of interest to our young friend. After a long walk in the garden, to hear from Malcolm all the mischief which had been done on Tuesday, Mrs. Dorothy rested on the sofa, as she expected some friends to come to luncheon with her. Hetty remained in the ante-room, and was glad of the opportunity of writing down the story of the kitten and the two mothers for little Miss

Fanny. The good-natured housekeeper had given her a sheet of paper on purpose to do it. How glad Hetty felt at that moment that she had taken pains when at school with her spelling and writing! She now reaped the reward of her diligence, for both did her credit. She had finished her story, and had time to read it once over before the bell rang, and she was called to lead her lady into the dining-room for luncheon.

After the little woman-in-waiting had conducted her mistress back into her sitting-room, she left her with her visitors, and returned to the parlour to eat her own dinner. The table was covered with dainties of all sorts; but she remembered Mr. Drayton's caution, and turned from them at once to the side-board, where she had now learned to look for the portion intended for her. And truly she might be well satisfied with it to-day, as she helped herself to some cold beefsteak pie and cucumber, with no fear this time of having to give it up untasted.

On returning to the ante-room after her dinner she missed her thimble, and recollecting she had put it down on the side-board while cutting the pie, she returned to the parlour to fetch it. There she found James devouring a glass of raspberry cream in such haste, that, instead of using a spoon, he was drinking it out of the glass, and, startled at Hetty's return, it streamed down each side of his mouth. He turned round with his usual effrontery, and said, "How fond you are of sweet things, my dear! I shall tell Mrs. Housekeeper how much you approve her creams." While speaking, the greedy boy was

stuffing cakes and fruit into his pocket. The girl made no answer. An exclamation of "For shame!" had escaped her when she first discovered the young fellow at his greedy tricks. She had now found her thimble on the side-board, and was retiring as quickly as she could, when James flew to the door, stood against it, and declared that she should not pass till she had promised not to tell tales of him. Hetty said with some spirit that she would not promise any such thing. "Then," retorted the impudent boy, "you shall give me a kiss, my pretty lass, as you did old coachman when he caught you on the back stairs. Did he look very young and handsome without his wig?" He was just going to catch the young girl, when she stepped back, and caught hold of the bell-handle, saying, "Let me go directly, or I'll ring." James looked very like a simpleton as he moved from the door to let Hetty pass. Again he felt her superiority, and disliked her the more.

"So I have caught you at last, young fellow!" exclaimed Mrs. Andrews in her most wrathful tone. "Come along, and hear what the butler will say to this. And to think of your daring to say a saucy word to that nice, modest young girl! I saw and heard it all from behind the screen. I have long suspected your greedy tricks, and was resolved to catch you. And now you shall be punished. Either you or I shall leave Mrs. Dorothy Cape's service."

But we will leave the butler and housekeeper to settle James' affairs, and look after Hetty. She soon recovered her composure, feeling that

her reputation was quite safe in Andrews' hands. How glad she now felt that she had secured such a friend, and had concealed nothing from the good housekeeper, not even the mistake of climbing the back stairs the first night of her arrival! How thankful she was now, too, that she had not given way to the temptation of touching or tasting the dainties before her! How many troubles would young servants escape by this strict adherence to truth and honesty!

It was with no small delight that Hetty found that the carriage had been ordered to take Mrs. Dorothy a drive. She knew that she was to accompany her mistress, and she looked forward to her second ride with much less awe, and much more pleasure, than she had to her first trial on Sunday morning.

When seated in the yellow coach, Mrs. Dorothy told Hetty a great deal about the flower-show, and said she was going to call on the lady who had gained the prize for the finest strawberries, as hers were spoilt. Hetty was very glad to see her mistress in such good spirits, and to find her so ready to forgive her rival at the show, and tried to listen with interest to all she heard; but before they had been out very long, the poor country girl became very uncomfortable from the motion of the carriage. "Oh, ma'am," she exclaimed, "I am so ill; I feel so bad!"

"Stop, stop!" shouted Mrs. Dorothy at the window. "Let the girl out. Open the door; quick, Sam, or she will faint!"

Poor Hetty! she certainly was not meant for a grand lady's waiting-maid. She thought so

too, as she seated herself on the bank, feeling very sick ; but the fresh air soon revived her, and a glass of spring water which was brought to her by a good woman from a cottage carried off the feeling of faintness. She was now able to follow the carriage, as the horses walked slowly up a long hill, and by the time they reached the top she was well enough to take her place again inside. They had not much further to go ; and, as Lady Thompson was at home, Hetty had another rest and another glass of water, after she had conducted her mistress into the house.

Mrs. Dorothy returned to her carriage, well pleased with her visit and with the feeling that she had done the right and kind thing. She was inclined to talk, but, alas ! poor Hetty was scarcely able to answer her : the motion of the carriage, and the smell of the new leather cushions, began to make her again feel sick and faint. She was bearing it as well as she could, and hoping that she should not be obliged to stop the carriage again and get out, when Mrs. Dorothy exclaimed, " I smell strawberries ; I am sure I do."

True it was ; for Lady Thompson had desired a basketful to be put into the carriage, as she understood that all Mrs. Dorothy's had been destroyed by the hail-storm.

" How very kind and thoughtful of her ladyship !" observed the old lady, much gratified with the attention, and really glad of the fruit. " Here, child," she added, " though you are not Patty, yet you shall share my treat."

"No, thank you, ma'am."

"Nonsense, child! do not be over-modest: help yourself; you have the basket."

"I would really rather not, ma'am, thank you kindly," was again the answer.

"What, child, you are not ill again, are you?"

"A little uncomfortable, and no how, ma'am."

"What a sad bore!" said the old lady, rather impatiently; "Patty is never ill in a carriage. If you get very bad you must tell me, and I will stop the carriage and put you out again. Be sure now that you speak in time."

Hetty's "yes, ma'am; I am so sorry to——" was spoken in so faint a tone that her mistress thought it best to stop the carriage at once, and let her ride for a while outside.

"Put this young woman up behind with you, Samuel," was the order given to the footman.

"Not I, indeed," grumbled the lazy fellow, when out of his mistress's hearing: "get up behind, and I shall ride on the box with coachee. I don't choose to be seen going through the town with a village lass like you by my side."

Poor Hetty felt hurt, but she said nothing, though the smart red and green livery looked less pleasing in her eyes now she found such a proud spirit dwelt within. She scrambled up into her high seat the best way that she could, and was soon revived by the fresh air blowing in her face.

Before she had been perched on her high seat many minutes, she felt so well that she thought

she might venture inside again, if she had dared to stop the carriage to say so. Passing by some fields not far from the town, she spied dear little Miss Fanny with Jane; but they were both so intent upon chasing a butterfly that they neither of them noticed the carriage.

"Oh," thought Hetty, "how I wish I could give the dear child one of her aunt's nice strawberries!"

The doctor's gig just then came along, and the carriage stopped while he drew up to inquire for his patient. This opportunity was cleverly seized upon by the waiting-woman to return to her mistress, who was glad to have back her companion, finding driving alone very dull amusement.

"Well, child, what did you see while you were outside? tell me: I want to be amused."

"Oh, ma'am, I saw one very pretty sight: dear little Miss Fanny running after a butterfly!"

"Do you mean by 'Miss Fanny' my niece, Miss Cape?"

"Yes, ma'am, Miss Cape, as I should have said: I ask your pardon."

"And pray who was Miss Cape with?"

"The servant, ma'am: Jane is her name, I think."

"And was my niece chasing butterflies along the high road, like a cottage child? Very improper!"

"No, indeed, ma'am; not in the road at all, but in a grass meadow. She was very far off, or I should have ventured to tell you, as I thought you would, maybe, have liked to have

given the dear"—child, Hetty was going to say, but wisely changed the word for—"young lady one or two of the strawberries."

"Ah, that I should!" said the aunt heartily; "for my little niece has a particular liking for strawberries. You shall take her some when you walk out with Dash this evening, if you remind me."

"Thank you, ma'am; I'll be sure not to forget."

Hetty got through the rest of the drive pretty well by keeping her face near the open window; but a sad headache remained, and she was thankful that she was not obliged to take a ride in a carriage every day. A walk in the fields she thought far more pleasant.

A joyful surprise awaited Mrs. Dorothy on her return home. Patty had arrived: her brother had been obliged to shorten his farewell visit, as the ship he was to go by was to sail sooner than was at first expected.

Hetty was present at the meeting between Martha and her mistress; and though she looked on with no small surprise at the warmth of the old lady's greeting, and the affectionate, unrestrained manner in which it was returned by the young favourite, she did so without the least regret, or the slightest feeling of envy.

While Hetty was upstairs tying up her bundle, the good housekeeper below was pouring her out a cup of tea to refresh her before she started. She was to walk to Lettsborough to go home by a London carrier who passed through

Nutstead, this not being the right day in the week for the country errand cart.

While Hetty drank her tea, and ate her slice of seed-cake, the friendly housekeeper spoke kindly to her, commending her for her good conduct. She also gave her a present of two little china ornaments to stand on the chimney-piece. "It is not for their value that you need prize them, my dear, but as a token of my regard; and when you look at them, you will think of me, won't you?"

Hetty assured her that she should, and ventured to add that she hoped, if at any time Mrs. Andrews was passing through the village of Nutstead, that she would do her the favour to look in upon her.

The next thing was to take leave of Mrs. Dorothy. This the poor girl felt to be rather an awful business. But she found she had no reason to fear; the old lady was in the best of all possible humours since "dear Patty" was returned. Hetty was presented with half-a-sovereign. This she at first objected to take, saying modestly that she was sure her poor services did not deserve such high pay. She should be quite satisfied with half that sum.

"No," said Mrs. Dorothy, "that is what you have fairly earned by your pretty behaviour, and I choose to give it you, child; so take it. And here is a ribbon, too, which I make you a present of." This was rather an unfortunate mark of the old lady's favour; it was a bright rose colour, and by far too handsome a ribbon for the

girl to wear, even had she not been in mourning. But of course she could only take it, and thank Mrs. Dorothy for it.

Hetty did not forget to ask for the strawberries for little Miss Cape, as she could leave them on her way. Mrs. Dorothy was pleased at her thoughtfulness, and by her remembering to call her little niece Miss Cape, instead of Miss Fanny; and Hetty was rewarded by being allowed to carry the fruit to the child.

When she left the drawing-room, she found, to her great joy, Patty with her bonnet on, prepared to give Dash his evening walk. The extreme delight of the faithful dog on seeing his old friend induced Mrs. Dorothy to give up Patty for half an hour, while she dressed; but she was bid not to exceed that time.

"We can go together as far as the Lodge," said Patty, "and have a bit of chat; I want to know how you got on."

"And I," replied Hetty, "am longing to hear all about your brother's visit. Did your poor mother enjoy it, or was she only thinking about his going away?"

"Oh! mother herself will tell you about that, and I shall only just tell you how thankful I was that you were able to take my place at once, and set me free, so that I did not lose Martin's company a single day—no, not even an hour; for he arrived just a few minutes after I got home on Saturday night."

"That was lucky; I am glad of it; but, Patty dear, I can't say I envy you your place as waiting-maid."

"Why not? It is a very comfortable one; I should be vastly sorry to lose it, I can tell you."

"You don't mean it; you are joking."

"But I do mean it, and no joke. I am afraid, Hetty, you did not make out so well as I thought you would. Did not things go straight? Tell me, how was it?"

Hetty, in answer, repeated many of her various trials and petty vexations, but she gained but little sympathy from Patty, who declared it was more than half her own fault. The fact was, that it was so long since Martha had entered Mrs. Dorothy's service, that she had forgotten the difficulties and sorrows of her first months of waiting. Besides this, the difference of her character made these lighter and of less importance; her disposition was cheerful and hopeful, and she possessed a natural talent for ruling others. It was the same manner and feeling which had procured her the title of Village Queen among her school-fellows, and established her authority over them, and it now showed itself in the influence she gained over her mistress, and the sway she held over the servants at Broom Bank. It was fortunate that Martha acted upon religious principles, so that her influence was used for good and not for evil, as is too often the case with household favourites.

"Well," observed Hetty, in conclusion, "I have learned my lesson: I shall be more willing to wait a bit for a service, and more content to live with uncle. I shall now be able to *taste the plums* of my cake, as your mother would say."

"Well, dear Hett, that is good hearing; and

for your encouragement I can tell you that Master Wright will not be sorry to have you back. He told mother but yesterday that he could not have thought how much he would miss you."

"I am sure, then, I am proud and thankful to hear it," was his niece's hearty acknowledgment.

By this time the girls had reached the Lodge, and they parted. Hetty went on to Mrs. Cape's. She was at home, and as friendly as before. She bid Hetty untie her bonnet, and remain with her till it was the right time for the carrier.

"I wanted to have a little more talk with you, and meant fully to do so. But I had not anticipated your leaving my sister so soon. Are you sorry or glad of Patty's return?"

"Oh, glad, ma'am, certainly! for indeed I was not fit for the place, though Mrs. Dorothy Cape and Mrs. Andrews were both very kind at parting. Only see, dear lady, what presents I have got."

The bundle was untied, and the rose-coloured ribbon and the two china ornaments were produced, and the half-sovereign.

"Ah, indeed! Very liberal: but I am sorry the ribbon is so bright a colour; it is too showy for you. But you are in mourning, and will not be tempted to wear it yet, at least."

"No, ma'am, not for a twelvemonth to come. But was it not kind of the housekeeper, ma'am? Such a sweet shepherd and shepherdess!"

"Yes; they will look very pretty on your cottage chimney-piece. I am greatly pleased that you should have received this mark of approbation from Andrews; it shows that she, too, was satisfied with your behaviour. You must, I

am sure, have had your difficulties with such a houseful of servants. Tell me how you got on with them."

"Pretty well, upon the whole, ma'am. I had but little to do with any of them, not taking my meals in the servants' hall. Young James was the worst. I did not like him at all. He was rude to me, and did not act well by his mistress. I think he deceived her, and that was wicked, taking advantage of her blindness. But Mrs. Andrews found him out at some of his bad tricks, and he will be sent away."

"It was all in your favour Andrews being your friend."

"Yes, ma'am, she was a good friend from first to last. But what I liked in Mrs. Andrews was, that she was always kind and respectful to her lady, behind her back as well as to her face. She never took advantage of her mistress's blindness."

"I am rejoiced to hear you say so. It is a great comfort to me to know that my sister has a person of that sort at the head of her large establishment. Now tell me, my good girl, what, of all the gay and grand things that you saw at Broom Bank, you would have chosen to take away with you, supposing that your choice had been given you?"

This question, it will be readily guessed, was asked by way of judging of the young girl's character. It did not take Hetty a moment to think, but she hesitated to answer.

"Well, have you thought?"

"Yes, ma'am." But no more was said.

"And will not you tell me then?"

"Please, ma'am, I don't like to do it."

The widow lady looked rather vexed, as she observed, "I am sorry that your choice would have been something that you are ashamed to mention."

"Indeed, ma'am, that is not it. It is not any thing *wrong* that I should like to have. I am sure you, good lady, would not think it *wrong*. But still I don't like to tell you."

"Well, you shall do as you please about that; though, I must say, I should very much like to hear what it is you have fixed your mind on."

"Then, dear lady, I am sure I will tell you. It is only because the thing belongs to yourself, and not to Mrs. Dorothy Cape, that makes me not like to name it."

This explanation only increased Mrs. Cape's curiosity. It was not without a smile that she heard it was the book of travels in the Holy Land.

"And such a grave book!" observed Mrs. Cape. "Not a story-book; then I could have better understood it."

"Please, ma'am, what little I read in it seemed very good and wise, to teach us better how to understand the Bible. I liked it greatly myself, with all the pictures too. But it was for uncle I wished for it most. He would be so pleased with it. He dearly loves any thing that makes the Bible more plain. And I have heard him tell mother that if he had been a rich man

he would have made a journey to Jerusalem for sure and certain."

"Then I am sure I will lend him the book with pleasure, as soon as my sister has done with it. And then he can travel to the Holy Land as he sits in his arm-chair, tell him, from me, without the trouble of a purseful of gold, which might tempt robbers out of their caves. But stay; I think I have another copy of the book which you can take with you now."

"Oh, dear, how glad I shall be!"

"The gentleman who wrote the book was a friend of my father's. Now this copy I bought on purpose for lending; so you need not fear, my good girl, that I shall want it in a hurry. Your uncle can keep it until he has quite done with it, and by that time, perhaps, you may see me, for I have a visit to pay at the Priory."

"Bless you, ma'am! Shall I really have the pleasure of seeing you again? And will you bring dear little Miss Cape with you, ma'am?"

"Yes, most likely. Fanny will be sorry to have missed you to-day. Tell me who is your uncle, my dear? And do you always live with him?"

"Yes, ma'am, since my mother's death. Uncle's name is Walter Wright. He lives at Nutstead, in the lone cottage they call the Hermit's Cell. He is the letter-carrier from the village to Lettsborough, ma'am; that is his business: and he is church clerk besides."

Mrs. Cape took down the address of Hetty's uncle. "If it is the postman," she added kindly,

"I know him well by sight, and often meet him in my walks."

"Do you, ma'am? God bless you! Then do stop and speak to him, that he may know who you are, when he hears of your great kindness to me."

Hetty's eyes first sparkled with eager delight, and then filled with tears of warm gratitude. But it was now time to go, and Mrs. Cape bid her not wait to see Miss Fanny, for fear she should be too late. "And mind," she said, "if you should miss the carrier, return here, and I can give you a bed for the night."

"Dear lady, how kind you are! I shall wish to be too late now."

"No, no; that would be wrong. If your uncle expects you to-night, it would make him uneasy."

"Ah, yes, ma'am, that would be wrong!" And Hetty coloured slightly, as she recollected how uneasy the good man had been the evening that he came home and could not find her.

She tied on her bonnet in haste; and taking the book and her bundle hurried off, after dropping her best curtsy, and repeating her grateful thanks. "Yes," she thought, as she went downstairs, "I would go through all the troubles again, carriage sickness and all, sooner than never to have seen that sweet lady's face, and heard all her kind and gentle words."



CHAPTER XI.

WHEN Hetty arrived at the Abbey Arms, she found her uncle waiting for her. He had given up his evening labour in his garden to meet her; and when he saw the cheerful smile with which his niece greeted him, he felt repaid for the sacrifice. Master Wright carried Hetty's bundle, which, with the addition of the big book, was rather heavy. They walked along briskly, the uncle well pleased to find his niece so full of glee. He had feared that she might have been

disappointed at Martha's returning before the week was up, but Hetty assured him with her frank simplicity that she was glad to come back; the lesson, though a short one, had been long enough and hard enough; that now she was willing to wait till he should think her fit for service. And she added humbly that she hoped to be more thankful for his kindness now that she knew better how to value such a home.

All this was very pleasant to Master Wright; and he, for his part, owned how welcome to him was his niece's return. "I don't know how it is," he said, as he sat by the round table while the girl ate the supper he had left ready prepared for her,—“I don't know how it is, but womenkind, and even young lassies, are more clever and handy about a house than we men-folk; it is their nature, I suppose: God made them to be helpmeets for men.”

The moment Hetty had finished her supper she opened her bundle, anxious to display the treasures it contained. Master Wright did not think much of the ornaments, nor even of the half-sovereign; but when he caught sight of the book, he asked eagerly, "What have you got there, child?" He listened patiently to the long explanation which followed, which included much that Hetty had to tell about Mrs. Cape, the kind widow lady.

Uncle Wright's grave face was lighted up with his sister's smile, as he thanked his niece for her thought for him. He knew, he said, that there were books written about the Holy Land, for the Vicar had once quoted one in a

sermon ; but he had never hoped to get a sight of any such book. The old man quite longed to begin it ; but the clock warned him that it was time to open a still more valuable volume, and his habit of punctuality prevailed over his curiosity.

The same chapter from the Epistle to the Ephesians was read as had been the night before Hetty's departure ; and when finished, Master Wright paused to ask his niece if he might venture to offer up a thanksgiving for her having been able to perform her service as unto God, and not unto man. Our young friend's conscience did not accuse her of any wilful neglect of duty, though she acknowledged that she had often erred from ignorance, and this she modestly gave her uncle to understand. He then knelt in prayer, and thanked God, who had heard and answered their former petitions ; and they went to bed with hearts warmed by mutual kind feeling.

Did Hetty despise her deal closet, and plain white curtains ? No, indeed ; neither had she any wish to change them for the pink chintz and mahogany chest of drawers. Her sleep was sound and sweet ; not even a dream troubled her with the sound of Mrs. Dorothy's silver bell.

Next morning Hetty was up with the lark ; awoke, as she thought, by the song of a lark, only it sounded too near and too clear, as if a bird was singing in the kitchen below. And what was her delight on coming downstairs to find that this was actually the case ! Fancy

her surprise at seeing a pretty little canary, in a tidy cage, suspended from the ceiling by the window.

"What a sweet bird! who can have done this? is it for me?" passed rapidly through her head. "Why did not uncle tell me last night? Was it to give me a pleasant surprise? Can it be Sally Day's doing? No, her bird was a goldfinch: this is a canary, like Miss Fanny's. Well, well, could it be Widow Gray? No, or Patty would have told me. It must be uncle; but where could he get such a pretty bird, and such a nice cage too? It would have cost too much money to buy it, she was sure."

When Master Wright came in to his breakfast, the smile of pleasure which beamed on Hetty's face was reflected back on his own.

"I see I need not ask how you like your young playfellow, lass," said he, glancing towards the cage.

"Oh, uncle, I *am* pleased!—such a pretty little creature! How did it come here? Who am I to thank, if it is meant for me?"

"Why as to that, it is a long story. If I have time to tell it at all, it must be with *last*, not *first*, cup of tea. Pour it out; it will cool while I say grace."

This pious act over, Hetty said, "While you drink your first cup, uncle, I will tell you about Mrs. Dorothy's beautiful garden."

"But, lass, with all your talk, you do not eat; art come back dainty?"

"No, not dainty, uncle; only I am too

happy and busy to eat just now. When you are gone, and I have no one to talk to, then I'll eat away."

She smiled, and told him how she had longed for a slice off his loaf and cheese the first evening she was at Broom Bank.

"But now this is your last cup of tea, uncle, and I am to hear about the bird."

"Well, the day after you went, lass, I found this young bird in a corner of my bed-room. The casement was open, so it flew in, most likely. Well, it was a canary, and so a cage bird escaped, most likely, and maybe from the aviary at the Priory. The bird was all of a flutter; it had, maybe, been pursued by a hawk;" and here the old man paused.

"Well, uncle, go on, please."

"Is not that enough, girl?" asked he. "After all, it is a long story; it's best to cut it in half."

"No, tell me all, pray do!" said Hetty, in a coaxing way.

"Well, I shut to the window, and I scattered a few crumbs, and put down some water. When I carried my letters to the Priory, I asked gardener if he had lost a canary bird?"

"'Oh!' says he, 'have you found one? You are welcome to keep it; we are so overstocked that I let half-a-dozen young ones fly this morning to take their chance.'"

"'This is cruel sport,' says I; 'for they won't live out in this climate, like robins. The hawks, too, most likely will be after them.'"

“ ‘Then you may catch them all, if you can cage them,’ says he.

“ ‘Ay, there’s the rub,’ says I, ‘how to get a cage.’ So he went to the loft, and searched out one which had been thrown by. And there’s the bird, and there’s the cage, and there’s the end of the longest story I have told these thirty years! Now, then, I am off, child; and thankful to have you to cook my bacon and cabbage, and maybe a pudding-cake too, eh?”

Hetty, too, was thankful. Quite a change seemed to have come over her uncle as well as over herself, though *he* had not been to Broom Bank to learn a lesson on contentment. Yet the same lesson had been conned over by him at home in his lone cottage. He, too, had learned to be thankful for a blessing which he had not before duly appreciated, the blessing of a companion,—a young, clever, handy companion; one whose age and nature it was to be cheerful, if he would but encourage her to be so. The few days at Broom Bank had, indeed, wrought wonders!

When Postman Wright came home at dinner-time, he actually heard his niece before he saw her, she was singing so cheerily over her work!

“That is right, my little lass! A merry heart and a ready hand! as your dear mother used to say; and now for dinner,—quick!”

“All ready, uncle,” was the reply; and the smoking bacon, cabbage, and pudding-cake were placed on the table like magic! Grace was said with thankful hearts, and an inward

thanksgiving added by the old man for the cheerful companion who was again to share his meal.

Hetty contrived, though she ate heartily, to tell some more of her wonderful stories. The look of attention, and the eh? and ah! of her uncle, showed sufficient interest to encourage her. When Master Wright set off to the post, she sat down to her work, glad that she could see to thread her needle, and that neither a rich carpet nor new curtains made it necessary to shut out the pleasant sunshine.

Time passed quickly while she was thinking what more she had to tell her uncle, what she would tell Sally Day when she saw her, and what questions she would ask of Widow Gray; for Patty's pleasure at returning to her place was still a puzzle to her. And so with all this to settle and arrange, and Dickey to pet and chirp to, the uncle reappeared before his niece had thought that he was half way home.

When Master Wright set forth to his evening labour she followed him, not to offer to weed another carrot-bed—for she was one who learned wisdom by experience—but to talk to him about the Lettsborough flower-show.

"Why do not you try for a prize, uncle? I am sure your cabbages are as big, and bigger, than other people's."

"Why, lass, I think you might answer that question for yourself."

"Because I told you of Mrs. Dorothy's ill-luck,—do you mean that?"

"No, not ill-luck, but the ill-feeling that too

often follows ill-luck. To think what poison grows underneath even innocent flowers!" The old man sighed, and then went on: "But ill-luck is not a right word to use, child. Storms do not come by chance."

"No, uncle; I know they are God's messengers for good or evil, as He pleases."

"Yes; and thanks be to his gracious providence who protected me. I was out in good part of that storm on Tuesday."

"Were you, indeed! I thought of you; but I hoped that you would have been safe in shelter. It was between two and three that it was at the worst with us."

"So it was here. I waited a bit at Lettsborough; but then it seemed to come on so slowly, I started, and thought to run away from it. But just half way between the town and the village, as I was crossing the common, a sudden shift of wind brought it up right over me. The thunder and lightning were awful indeed; but I knew I was in God's hands. When the hail fell it was so thick and heavy that I laid myself flat down among the furze, and that and the bank sheltered me a bit. So, blessed be God, I took no harm; nor the letters either, for I put the bag under me."

"Dear me, uncle, only to think of your being out in it at all!"

"Ay, child, and many besides me out in it too. And the poor dumb animals! Three sheep on that piece of waste all struck with lightning, but I was spared! God's mercy is great."

Hetty stooped down to pick up a fat worm which was just then turned up by Wright's spade, and she carried it off to the robin's nest. When she came back, she began again to talk about the flower-show.

"But, uncle," she said in a tone of remonstrance, "you cannot mean that you are afraid that trying for prizes would make you ill-natured or envious?"

"I am not better than the rest of the world, girl; we are all made alike."

"Oh! but, uncle, all people who belong to the show do not give way to evil tempers."

"I tell you what, Hett, my dear, a burnt child dreads the fire. I once, many years ago, had something to do with this concern. A neighbour and I were trying for the same prize. Our cabbages were so much of a muchness, that it was an even chance for us both. The morning of the show-day I went into my garden, full of hope, to cut my cabbage. We had measured them the night afore, and mine was nearly an inch the biggest round. Well, lo and behold! my prize plant was more than half eaten, and the foot-print of a sheep pointed out the cause of my disaster. I looked about me in vain for any gap in the hedge by which the animal could have entered, but none could I find. But the gate told a bad tale; it was off its hinges. 'An enemy hath done this,' I says to myself. My neighbour got the prize, but he lost a friend; and from that day to this I have washed my hands of all rivalry."

"But, uncle, it seems to me that you punished

yourself for your neighbour's sin; that was not right or necessary, was it?"

"I see, child, that you must hear the whole truth, and as you are one who speak it yourself, why you deserve it, though it makes me uncomfortable now, that it does, to think what a passion I was in when I discovered the trick that had been played me. I would have given the fellow a good thrashing if I had not despised him too much to touch him. Now you know the real reason why I gave up rivalry; my temper would not stand it. Thanks be to God, I do not often transgress of late years; but when I was younger, it was often a hard fight to get the better of myself. But prayer and perseverance do all things, for what is too hard for the Lord?"

"Mayhap you have noticed my way of not speaking when I am vexed, child?"

"Yes, I have. I recollect in particular that day I behaved so wrong, and left the house door open. You scarcely spoke, but went to your own room."

"Ah! I was greatly vexed; so vexed that I feared I might transgress with my tongue, so I just shut myself up to pray and reflect a bit."

"I hope you will never have to do so again on my account, dear uncle," said Hetty, touched and humbled.

"No, no! most like not. You'll be careful now, lass. But, mind ye, I don't mean to say that it is wrong in those who can keep their tempers straight to put up for prizes. The sin is not in *striving*, but in the way of striving.

Old Dame Barton at Lettsbro', now, is as good a Christian, and as meek of spirit and kind in heart, as any of God's creatures, and she won many a prize afore she was too elderly to tend her garden any longer. Now, child, methinks I've preached you quite a long discourse, and I think it must be time most like for supper."

"Supper time can it be? Why, how quick the time has gone! But I'll run and get it all ready, and wash the lettuce. We are to have it with our bread and cheese, are not we, uncle?"

"Yes, sure, my lass, if you have a fancy for it."

"Oh, I do like lettuce; it is so sweet and cool this hot weather!" And off ran Hetty in full glee. Could this be the same Hetty who only a week before was sure she never could love her uncle; never be happy in her new home?



CHAPTER XII.

ON Saturday afternoon Sarah Day called in. She was, she said, "longing to hear about all and every thing Hetty had to tell;" but she could only stop a few minutes, as she was again going to the Priory with some more work. She did not venture at once to ask her friend to go with her, though she was resolved in her own mind that she should do so.

"Now just begin at the beginning, Hett, and tell me all."

"Oh, that would take a long day, I can tell you, Sally! But I'll just give you some idea what a grand lady Mrs. Dorothy Cape is, and what a grand house she lives in: that was what astonished me most at first."

Sally made Hetty describe the rooms, even to the colour of the curtains and the carpets, only interrupting her with "how I wish I had been you!" "how grand!" but when it came to Mrs. Dorothy's bed-room, and the long swing looking-glass, "so big that you might see yourself from the crown of your head to the sole of your foot," Sally could not contain herself.

"Oh dear me, how I should like just for once to look at myself in that glass when I am all in my best! on a Sunday, I mean."

"You could not have done that," said Hetty; "for it was always covered with a green baize; and a sad sight it was to me, for of what use was it to the poor blind lady?"

"But if I had been you, my dear, I should have taken the liberty of making use of it myself. How could madam have told if the cover was over it or not?"

"Oh, fie, Sally! you would not have been so wicked as to take advantage of her affliction?"

"You were always more precise than me, Hett; I wonder if your tender conscience will allow of your coming a bit of the way with me? I will not insist on your going all the way to the Priory this time. But I dare not stay any

longer ; and yet I want to hear about the other bed-rooms, and a deal more."

Hetty hesitated ; she wished to oblige Sally, and she wanted to tell more of her story, which interested her far more in the relation than in the reality ; but she was half afraid to go.

"Come," said Sally, "only just a little way ; no further than the first field."

Hetty yielded ; but she would not even put on her bonnet, lest she should be tempted to go too far ; and she did not forget to lock the door. Just as the girls were starting, Sally noticed the canary, and its history had to be told ; but short work was made of *that*, for Hetty's giddy companion would not listen to her grateful praise of her uncle's kindness.

"If your old uncle is really so much improved," said Sally, "prove it in your actions ; show yourself less afraid of breaking your leading-strings. Now for more about Broom Bank. How did you like joints of fresh meat and puddings every day ? that was the way the servants lived, I suppose, as they do at the Priory."

At first Hetty was going to say how different her experience was, but she checked herself. "It is," she thought, "too much like telling tales out of school ;" and she answered, that she believed the servants lived very comfortably ; that she did not take her meals with them, but Mrs. Andrews was very kind, and saw that she wanted for nothing.

"Where did you eat your meals then, Hett ?"

"In Mrs. Dorothy's room, after she had done."

"La, you don't say so! What! in the grand dining-room?"

"Yes, in the grand dining-room"—Hetty smiled as she recollected her first dinner of cold potatoes and dry bread—"and the table was covered with silver and glass and real china—all fit for a queen!"

"And lots of sweets, I guess, like a pastry-cook's shop on a market-day,—eh, Hett?"

"Yes, fruit, and cakes, and such like; but they were only to look at, you know, for of course such dainties were not for me."

"Pooh! You don't mean, now, that you were such a goose as to let your mouth water in vain, day after day?"

"But I do; for though no one was in the room part of the time but my poor blind mistress, yet you know, Sally, that God's eye was always upon me."

"Well, but without exactly helping yourself, there must have been ways and means, if you had had your wits about you. Why not make friends with the footman? he, I dare say, was not so over-scrupulous, and you might have shared with him, and asked no questions."

"Not I, indeed, just to get into disgrace, as James did."

"What was that? Oh tell me, do!"

Hetty related the scene in the dining-room, but the moment after she was sorry that she had told. It seemed ill-natured, as the boy was now in trouble, and looking out for another situation; and she made Sally promise not to repeat the story. By this time they had crossed the first

field, and Sally tried in vain to tempt her friend over the stile. On parting she said, "Mind, Hett, I shall come and walk to church with you to-morrow, so don't start without me."

"I think I shall go early with my uncle, so you must not depend upon my looking-glass, Sally dear," was the prudent reply.

Hetty only stopped once, to gather a few wild roses out of the hedge, and then hurried home, satisfied with herself for having this time done only what she knew her uncle would not disapprove.

But there seemed a fatality in Sally's visits, for when Hetty put her hand in her pocket for the key, it was gone! and she could not unlock the door she had so carefully fastened. She felt if there was a hole in her pocket; no. And then she recollected that she had never put the key into her pocket, but carried it in her hand. She must, then, have dropped it. This was careless; she felt it was, and blaming herself she hurried back to look for it, step by step, all across the field, yet no key could she find. She was in despair, when the hum of a bee round the roses she held in her hand reminded her that she had laid down the key when she gathered the flowers. Now all was right. Sure enough the key was there; and with a light heart and quick step she bounded home, and whom should she meet in the lane but Master Wright, who was returning before his usual time, having had a lift in a friend's market cart. How happy was the girl now that she had resisted Sally's entreaty to go a little further! How glad that she had the lost key safe at that

moment in her hand ! Not but what she told her uncle the whole story,—that is, all that threw blame on herself,—with her usual candour. She had never had any concealments with her mother, and now she felt inclined to have none with her uncle either, for she was already beginning to love, and forgetting to fear him.

Instead of passing on into his chamber this time, Walter Wright seated himself on the nearest chair, and said heartily, “I am glad, my lass, you had a run in the field, since you minded to lock the door, and found the key. Another while put on your bonnet and go all the way with your young companion ; only turn down the bench under the window, and by that token I shall know all is right. Mark, now ! *that* shall be our signal in future.”

“Thank you, uncle ! I will another day. Sally wanted so to hear all I had to tell about Broom Bank that I would willingly have gone on a good bit of the way, had I not remembered——”

“That was right. Always profit by experience : that is the way to grow wise, and good too. But, hark ye, child ! let me give you a caution. Keep a guard on your tongue while talking to young folk on what you saw and heard at Broom Bank. There are secrets in all families ; and servants are particularly bound not to be tale-bearers and busybodies in other men’s matters.”

“Indeed, uncle, I ought to have thought of this. I told something just now which I had better have left untold. I was sorry for it as soon as the words were out of my mouth. Sally

promised not to repeat it, so I hope it won't go further. I must be more careful; but it is so difficult not to tell every thing. It was all so new and strange for me to be at service, you know."

"Yes, no doubt; and old folks, like myself and Mrs. Gray, would make allowance and give you a check like, when you were telling too much for a discreet household maiden. But it is different with young ones; so be doubly careful then. Do not repeat what you would not like Madam Cape to hear, could she be a listening. There, that is a good rule for you."

"That is like one Mr. Drayton gave me. I may talk about him without fear; for he was so good, and so kind, quite like a clergyman. I wish, uncle, that you knew him and young Mrs. Cape."

"I think I know them both, girl; that is, by sight. I have many times met a widow lady walking with a pretty little lass by her side. That is Mrs. Cape, I take it?"

"Oh yes! I dare say; for she told me she often passed you in her walks. And Mr. Drayton, he is short, and stout, and middle-aged."

"Yes, yes! I know him too: and I heard the doctor call him by his name one day, so that makes it sure. And how was the clergyman kind to you, lass? Did he hear you read the catechism in church, or did Mrs. Dorothy Cape take you to the Sunday school, maybe?"

"No, uncle, you are a bad one to guess! Both times you are wrong. When the good gentleman called at Broom Bank, which he did

three times whilst I was there, he always gave me a bit of advice, and looked so kind, and spoke so pleasant, that I was doubly willing to follow it. He told me what temptations I should meet with in service. I hope when I really do go out in good earnest, I shall not forget what he told me: indeed, even in those few days I found it useful; it helped me to resist temptation, and to do what was right."

"Come, child, we are doing nought but talk; why should we not work too? Come and help to gather the vicar's Sunday dish of peas. *Mine* are always ready first: my garden lies so snug and warm to what his does. And an honour and a pleasure it is to me, for no worthier man breathes."

Hetty caught up a basket, followed her uncle, and was soon hard at work; but "Not so fast!" cried Master Wright; "look ye! all pods are not alike; pluck only the full ones." Friend Wright was also one on whom experience was not thrown away. He, too, remembered the carrot-bed!

When the peas were gathered, Hetty was allowed to carry them up to the vicarage, while her uncle watered his strawberry-bed. And very well pleased she was with the commission; all the more pleased from the unexpected pleasure of meeting Mr. Drayton, who was coming away from the vicarage, where he had been calling. As she dropped her curtsey, the good gentleman stopped and said, "I dare say you will show me where the clerk lives: I have a little business with him."

"Yes, sir, that I will, and welcome. He is my own uncle, please, sir."

"Indeed! that is fortunate. But tell me, how came you here? Have you left Mrs. Dorothy Cape's service?"

"Yes, sir; I came home on Thursday."

"I am sorry that you did not suit."

"Please, sir, I was only wanted while Patty Gray was away for a holiday."

"Oh, was that all! It was, then, no fault of yours; I am glad of that. Be careful, my good girl, when you do get a permanent situation to do your best to keep it; changing about is a bad thing, and in every place you will find trials and disagreeables. At service, as well as at home, we shall ever have evil mixed with good. If we are wise, we shall be more anxious about doing our duty than about looking after ease and pleasure. Happiness is more likely to find us in the path of duty when we are not thinking about it, than when we are seeking it in every corner of the world. You saw something of this in your late place, where you saw that the riches and luxury so much coveted in this life failed to make poor Mrs. Dorothy Cape happy."

"Poor lady! I used, sir, to pity her, and think she ought to be happy," said Hetty feelingly, as she opened the gate and the curate passed into the garden, where Master Wright was still busy at work. They soon walked off together to the church, and Hetty prepared supper against her uncle came back.

When he returned he seemed very much pleased; and well he might be, for Mr. Drayton

had spoken kindly, and in commendation of the old man's niece. "What little he had seen of her at Broom Bank had," he said, "impressed him greatly in her favour." This was a cordial to worthy Wright's heart. He ate his supper with double relish, and told Hetty cheerfully that he had met with Mrs. Gray, and accepted an invitation for her to walk to the Priory Church Sunday afternoon, and drink a cup of tea with the widow afterwards. This was just what the young girl wished, and she thanked Uncle Walter heartily.

Their evening meal ended, Hetty expressed aloud her thankfulness that *this* Saturday was not *last* Saturday; and she inwardly resolved that neither should the *coming* Sunday be like the *past* Sunday. She thought of her promise to the widow lady, and she prayed for the help of the Holy Spirit to enable her to keep her good resolutions of being more devout and reverent at church.



CHAPTER XIII.

THE godly wishes and right thoughts which were last in Hetty's mind at night were the first that she was conscious of in the morning. This was a hopeful beginning towards keeping the Sunday as a holy day. Hetty, moreover, adhered to her good resolution of walking to church with her uncle. She engaged to walk quietly by his side without talking, since that

was Master Wright's custom, as he liked to collect his thoughts; and she said that she should not mind being a little before time, as she wanted to finish learning the ninety-sixth Psalm, which she had begun before breakfast.

Sally Day was not at church; so there was nothing particular to call off Hetty's attention. The sermon was a very plain one,—on the overruling providence of God. The subject had been chosen by the Vicar in consequence of the severe thunder-storm, the mention of which gave an unusual interest to the subject. Hetty felt more thankful than she had done before both for her own and her uncle's preservation; which latter had indeed been a striking mercy, from the circumstance of the three sheep having been killed by the lightning almost, as it were, by his side.

It was to be expected that this sermon would afford subject of conversation on their return home, and that the feeling of gladness of heart would add to the thankfulness with which they ate their dinner.

In due time Widow Gray came to claim her young companion for the walk to the Priory Church, and friendly cup of tea. The girl was quite ready, and more than willing; and before they had crossed the first field they fell into regular chat. The good widow had her news to tell of her son's visit, and Patty's happiness at being able to share it from first to last. Many pious sentiments and motherly feelings were naturally brought forth in relating this little family history. Hetty listened to all its details

with interest and profit too; and her affection and respect for her mother's old friend were increased. She was strongly reminded of that dear mother when Mrs. Gray said, "Ay, it was, sure enough, a heart-breaking affair to part with my son, my only son; but you see, dear, it was for his good; and a mother thinks more of that than her own comfort. I am getting in years, and cannot expect to be much longer in this world; but he, my blessing, is only reaching his prime. Thanks be to God he has a good wife to look after him, and it is but right she should be more to him than father and mother both; so says the Bible. It would have been selfish and ungrateful in me to have kept him. Every one tells me my son is sure to get on in America, because he understands his business, and is so very steady and quiet a man. And so I have only to say, may it be so, and God's will be done!"

It was not until their return, after church, that Hetty was able to ask her questions about Patty's service. This part of the conversation I will give at length.

"Well," said Hetty, "I cannot understand how Martha can be so comfortable and happy as you say she is, Mrs. Gray."

"Because you were disappointed yourself, child. But, my dear, let me point out your error. You always expect too much at first, and then, when you discover your mistake, you are too much cast down, and give up in despair. Now that is not the way to get through this world. Why, was it not just the same when

you came to live with your uncle? Have you forgotten how you cried all day, and protested you should never love him, and never feel at home, or be happy again?"

"So I thought and felt at first, Mrs. Gray. It was silly and wrong of me: I can see that now. But really uncle is very much altered for the better, or maybe I should be as miserable still."

"Yes, my good girl, I am free to admit that Master Wright is more cheerful now than he was at first; but he was quite as worthy and kind-hearted a man *then* as he is *now*. You made no allowance for him, though you expected him to make a great deal for you. I told you so at the time, didn't I, my dear?"

"Yes; I recollect it well."

"And, child, ask your own conscience if *you* are not changed for the *better*. How discontented and ungrateful you were before you found out that there were worse trials and less comfortable homes than yours in your uncle's cottage. I don't want to vex you, child. There, don't cry, dear; the worst is over; I hope the bright side of the picture is towards you now. Only try to remember another time that when you are looking at the *dark* side, there is a *bright* one too."

"Oh, Mrs. Gray! I do not believe there ever would have been a bright side to the picture of Broom Bank, to *me* at least."

"There, that is what I tell you, my dear; that is just where you are so wrong. If you had been a few months instead of only a few

days at Mrs. Dorothy Cape's, I make no doubt but you would have learned to smile, if not laugh outright, at many of your troubles ; that is, of course I mean, if you had set your mind to do your duty to God as well as to your mistress, to have made the most of your blessings and the least of your trials. The old lady has her virtues as well as her infirmities, and my girl has learned to manage her as a nurse would a sick child. I do not mean in any improper or disrespectful way, for Patty knows better than to do that. At first, of course, this was very difficult ; and every body might not so soon have got the way of it as my Martha. You know at school her governess used to say she was her right hand like, from the clever way she ruled the younger classes."

" Yes, I know ; and out of school, too, we all, big and little, minded Queen Patty. Even Sarah Day yielded to her bidding."

" Well, so it is. God gives us different talents ; to some one, to others five ; but then we must each turn ours to account, whether we have the *one* or the *five*."

" Indeed, Mrs. Gray, I did try to do my best ; but I soon found that though the work was light of hand, it was too heavy for me, so to speak."

" I have no doubt but you did your best, my good girl ; I know it, for Patty wrote me word in the letter I got yesterday. She said—but I have the letter here, and will read you her own words : ' It would do your heart good to hear how well Mrs. Andrews speaks of Hetty. And young Mrs. Cape, too, was greatly pleased with

what she saw of her.' That is pleasant to hear, for you and for me too, as your mother's friend. I know how she doated on you, and prayed for a blessing on her careful training of you, my dear."

Hetty was silent for a minute. The thought of her mother always filled her heart to overflowing. And the widow also was silent, for she respected the girl's feelings. After a bit Hetty said, "That dear, kind widow lady, I quite loved her!" She went on to tell of some of her many friendly acts, ending with, "I can't think why Mrs. Dorothy Cape did not like her. She must have been envious of the dear lady's beauty and goodness."

"Hush, child!" and the widow stopped her. "It pains me to hear you speak so. It is not right, even if true. Speak as much in praise of the young lady as you please; but remember you have once served Mrs. Dorothy Cape, and owe her the duty and respect of a servant to a mistress."

Hetty blushed. She recollected her uncle's caution, and coloured still deeper when she thought how little she should have liked the poor blind old lady to have overheard her.

"Besides," continued Widow Gray, "you are ungrateful; for Martha tells me, in another part of her letter, that her mistress often speaks in your praise; and even went so far as to say that, if Patty had gone to America with her brother, she thought she should have got reconciled to you after a bit, if you could have got over being sick in a coach. What was that story, lass? You have not told me that."

The story of the drive was given. And in answer to Hetty's question whether Patty was never sick, even at first, the widow replied, "I forget how that was; let me think. Yes; I remember now she was. But as that was one of the difficulties that must be got over if she was to keep her place—and she was very anxious to do this on my account, as the wages were high—she asked the doctor to give her something to stop it. I forget now what he called it. Whatever it was, it was a bad taste, enough to dispirit any young girl. But you see, child, Martha had such a spirit always from a child. The harder her task, the more delight she seemed to take in learning it. She was always one for conquering a difficulty;—never for passing it by with '*I cannot do it!*'"

"I wish I was like her," was Hetty's humble observation.

"No, do not wish that, dear; you have your good qualities, as well as my Martha and other girls. All are not alike. It is best as it is; for God Almighty so ordained it. Do not wish for what cannot be; but improve what is good, and correct what is wrong in your own character; particularly this way of giving up at once, and taking on so in time of trial and difficulty. If you are ever married, by and by, it will be greatly against you as a wife and a mother; it will, indeed, child."

Hetty sighed, and said she hoped she should never be married, for fear she should be left a widow. She thought it must be worse to

lose a good husband than never to have one at all.

Mrs. Gray's answer was, "Like most earthly blessings, married life has its shade as well as its sunshine; but, for her part, though she never ceased to regret her good husband, and never should, yet she would have been sorry not to have enjoyed his society and help for the twenty years that he was spared to her." One blessing of her marriage she did not omit to remark, still remained to her,—a good and dutiful daughter. She ended with "But it is time enough to think about that when you are older, lass. What I was going to say, now we are talking so free and comfortable together, is, that you must not lose heart when, after a bit, the novelty of your return home has worn off. Do not give way afresh to discontent; you will be tempted to it again and again."

"Oh, I hope not! *Now* I shall always be contented and happy, Mrs. Gray."

"I wish with all my heart you may, child; but I am older, and cannot help seeing further. Take my word for it, you will sometimes be weary, and feel dull; and Uncle Walter will, at times, be silent, or, as you think, over-particular. It will, it must be so. The world is the world, the same as a school is a school. Faults there will be, and correction there ought to be. But I do not wish to dishearten you, dear lass; only to warn you."

"Thank you; I know you mean kindly, Mrs. Gray, though it does seem hard to put it so

plain before me just now, when I feel content and cheerful."

"Ay, ay, so it must; maybe I should have waited, and kept my advice till it was wanted. But, as I told you long ago, I am not a hand at teaching, and never was, so you'll just excuse it, dear. And to show you it was not from any want of kindly feeling on my part, I will mention a little plan I have in my head for cheering you up when you do begin to flag a bit, though it is letting the cat out of the bag before its time; for it may not be for a month to come."

"What may not be?" asked Hetty, full of curiosity.

"Why, child, I was going to explain. When Mrs. Chandler, at the mill, is put to bed, I am to have the charge of her little Mary. It is a dear, pretty creature; so sweet-tempered, and easy to manage; and I thought to myself, what a nice playmate it will make for Hetty Wilmot. I dare say, child, you won't object to give me a helping hand with baby on my ironing days, or when I am baking; do you think you shall be able?"

"Dear me, yes, Mrs. Gray! and pleased and proud enough to do it. You know I dearly love a baby, and used to be so fond of nursing my poor little brother before he died."

"Well, child, so you were; and little Mary is just about the age your brother was,—fourteen months old. It will be nice for her to get a walk with you in the field, or in uncle's garden. You see I have only the back yard behind, and

the street before my door; that is not the same thing at all, pretty creature! for she comes from a fine air. And there is another thing I have to ask your help in."

"Oh! any thing I can do for you, Mrs. Gray, needs no asking, only telling."

"That's kind of you, lass, and said hearty, too, like your dear mother; she was always the ready one to grant a favour afore it was asked. This, dear, is a bit of needlework. My Martha bought me a new gown for a present, and she intended to have made it up for me herself, but her time was shortened, and we had a trouble to finish the frocks for Martin's two little girls, that Aunt Patty was so proud to send them."

"Martha is as fond of giving as ever, I see," said Hetty. "But about the gown; I'll do the skirt with pleasure, and the body too, if you can cut it out and fix it."

"Ah, well! we will talk about that to-morrow, for we are forgetting it is Sunday. I will look up early in the week, and see your presents. Now we will enjoy our tea. Sit down, child, and rest you, while I fetch the kettle; a neighbour was kind enough to boil it for me, so the room is pleasant and cool without a fire."

"I will set the tea-things, shall I?" asked Hetty.

"Yes, do, dear. You will find the bread and butter, and a bunch of young radishes which your kind uncle gave me, all ready washed, in the larder."

Never was simple cottage fare eaten with more cheerful and grateful hearts. Hetty did not

stay long afterwards ; she was anxious to go home and see how uncle liked the book of travels. She found him with it open on the table before him ; he had already read the two first chapters, and was as much pleased and interested as she had hoped he would be. They looked at some of the prints together, till it was time for the evening chapter, and evening prayer, and the evening hymn. Thus concluded the well-spent Sunday, which no doubt sanctified the week which followed.

But it is not my intention to pursue my little history further. We may now safely leave our young friend, with the hope that she will go on steadily improving, following Widow Gray's advice to cultivate the good qualities, and correct the bad ones, in her character, without vainly wishing that she had been created like Patty, or any other person whom she thought better than herself.

In this work of self-improvement she would have her difficulties and her discouragements. To acquire good habits, and get rid of bad ones, is no easy matter, as all those know who have tried to do so. Some are born more gifted than others, but all have faults peculiar to their own character. Happily, to all is the help of God's Holy Spirit offered, and to those who embrace this offer, and make use of this aid, nothing is impossible.

Uncle Walter, too, had his difficulties and trials. His young niece was not always punctual, and often he would rather have sat silent than have talked ; but he, too, made the neces-

sary effort, and in time found it easy to be more cheerful and less rigorously exact. Would this have been the case though, think you, if Hetty had continued discontented and careless? Certainly not. Mutual kindness and forbearance fostered mutual affection, and the blessing of the God of love rested on the Old Man and his Sister's Child.

THE END.

2

